

An Encyclopedia of Shamanism

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N

Nadle

The **gender-variant** individuals among the **Dineh**, or Navajo, of the North American southwest. *Nadle* means “changing one” or “one who is transformed” and refers to the androgynous or hermaphroditic nature of these individuals. The Dineh believe that the *nadle*, as part of natural beauty in the order of the universe, has a special contribution to make to the people.

Traditionally, the *nadle* in his or her role as mediator keeps the men and women together in a unit that supports healthy child rearing and cultural continuity. Ceremonially, the *nadle* performs a special role in the night **dances** before the winter solstice.

Navajo **shamans** and *nadles* are distinguished in Dineh culture by their direct relationships with **spirit**. Shamans are not necessarily *nadles*; however some *nadles* became powerful shamans. More often *nadles* specialized in some aspect of curing. For example, the *nadle* healers were considered excellent chanters. They had special **chants** for curing **illness** and insanity and for aiding in childbirth.

The wisdom that supports the Dineh value for and respect of the *nadle* was laid down in their mythology. In the Third World there lived twins, Turquoise Boy and White Shell Girl, each androgynous boy/girl beings. They were the first *nadles*. Only with this help from the twins did the **First People** began to farm, make pottery, weave baskets, and shape tools from stone and bone. The people were thankful for the inventiveness of the *nadles* for it improved the quality of their lives.

Over time White Shell Girl entered the **moon** and became Moon Bearer. Turquoise Boy stayed with the people, teaching them to grind corn, cook food, and weave cloth. Then a great flood came and threatened to kill them all. Just in time Turquoise Boy found a large hollow reed, through which the people climbed into the **Fourth World** and were saved from the great flood.

Moon Bearer brought them another reed in time for the people to climb to the Fifth World, the present world of the Dineh. The Dineh perspective is apparent from this creation story; the very survival of the people was and is dependent on the inventiveness of the *nadle* and his or her ability to see old things in new ways. See also **transformed shaman**.

Kalweit, Holger. *Shamans, Healers, and Medicine Men*. Boston: Shambhala Publications, 1992.

Williams, W. L. *The Spirit and the Flesh*. Boston: Beacon Press, 1992.

Nagual

Nagual refers to both the helping **animal spirit** of the **shaman** and to shamans who have the ability to shape-shift into the animal form of their helping spirit. Nagual, used by the native peoples of Mexico and Guatemala, is derived from the **Aztec** word, *nahualli*, which refers to the quality of being disguised or masked. See also **helping spirits; power animals; shapeshifting**.

Harner, Michael J. *The Way of the Shaman*. San Francisco: Harper-Collins, 1990.

Nagualism

An anthropological term derived from **nagual**, a **helping spirit** of a **shaman** in Central America. A person or people who practice nagualism work with guardian **spirits**, helping spirits, or spirit familiars as a source of guidance, protection, and personal power.

Naming

Naming, or the acquisition of a new name, is used to mark the completion of an existential transformation. In **shamanism**, naming ceremonies are performed to mark the **initiation** from child to adult, for professional initiations later in life, and as an aspect of some **healing** processes.

Naming at initiation signifies the wholly different orientation to the world that is created. It marks the death of the child/novice self and the successful birth of the new, re-oriented self. The gift of a new name signifies the existential nature of this transformation, that it is more than a change that could change back. Initiation is a transformation from which there is no return.

Similarly, in cases of mental or a nearly fatal **illness**, giving the patient a new name connects the patient to an identity that is not associated with illness. The naming **ceremony** takes place after the successful removal of the **spirits** or energies that caused the illness. For example, Tserin-zaarin, a Mongol **shaman**, uses naming as a part of his healing process with mentally ill patients. The new name signifies the transformation of the patient through the healing process. The identity the patient knew as mentally ill and the vessel the troublesome spirits might try to return to is gone with the old name. Tserin-zaarin is reputed to be especially good at healing mental illness in this way.

Nanabush

The founder of the **Midewiwin Society**. Nanabush is a cultural hero of the central **Algonquian**, who was given the task of founding the **medicine society** by the Creator Spirit.

Kalweit, Holger. *Shamans, Healers, and Medicine Men*. Boston: Shambhala Publications, 1992.

Nande'rú

A *nande'rú* is a **shaman** of the **Avá-Chiripá**, an indigenous people of what is now Paraguay, Argentina, and Brazil in **South America**. *Nande'rú* meaning "our fathers" is more formal. A common term *paí* and the master shamans are referred to as *paí guazú*.

Natema

See *ayahuasca*.

Native American Church

The Native American Church was established in the United States in 1922 with 13,300 members. The membership has now grown to more than a quarter million member. The religious practices of the church center around the sacramental use of the **entheogen** peyote in a vision-questing ritual that combines Christianity, Native American beliefs, and high moral principles. These practices have helped to unify more than forty nations of Native Americans in the United States and Canada.

Through the Kiowa and Comanche peoples, **peyote** use spread into **North America** from Mexico. This became particularly important in the last half of the nineteenth century when the Native Americans were confined to reservations and forced into missionary schools, causing the disintegration of their cultural and spiritual heritage.

Faced with potential genocide, a number of leaders from various nations saw the peyote practice as a way to unify the people with each other and the spirit world of their **Ancestors**. A new kind of peyote-based spiritual practice emerged and was adapted to the particular needs of the contemporary Native Americans. In an attempt to protect their rights to free religious activity in the face of opposition from missionaries and local governments, Native Americans organized these peyote practices into the legally recognized the Native American Church.

The role of the peyote sacrament within the church is two-fold. First, peyote induces physical and psychological well-being and alters consciousness so that the individual experiences his or her Oneness with God. Secondly, peyote acts as the divine messenger, enabling the individual to come into direct communication with God, without the mediation of the **priest**. See also **vision quest**.

Conner, Randy P. *Blossom of Bone: Reclaiming the Connections Between Homoeroticism and the Sacred*. San Francisco: HarperCollins, 1993.

Heinze, R. I. *Shamans of the 20th Century*. New York: Irvington Publishers, Inc., 1991.

Schultes, Richard Evans, Albert Hofmann, and Christian Rätsch. *Plants of the Gods: Their Sacred, Healing, and Hallucinogenic Powers*. Rochester, VT: Healing Arts Press, 2001.

Nature Spirits

Nature spirits are one of several kinds of **helping spirits** (energies of the invisible world) that the **shaman** works with while in an **altered state of consciousness**. A nature spirit is the spiritual aspect of any form found in nature, e.g., **trees, water, sun, moon, sky**, wind, mountain, stones, etc. Shamans recognize that all things throughout the **Kosmos** are connected as a whole. They experience that whole as the creative life force of the Kosmos. All aspects of that whole are imbued with that **spirit** or life force. Thus, animate or inanimate, all aspects of nature are believed to contain spirit.

Generally, the spirits of nature are believed to dwell in the physical form, for example, the **Shuar** of the Amazon believe that Inti, the spirit of the sun, is the physical sun and lives in the physical sun. When a spirit of nature leaves its physical form to work with the shaman, it may be seen in human form or its nature form. Examples of **cultures**

who look to the nature spirits as helpers, **teachers**, and the source of **healing** powers are the Shinto of **Japan**, the **Huichols** of Mexico, and most of the peoples of **Southeast Asia**.

All shamans draw the **energy** they use for healing from Nature, regardless of the specific helping spirits they work with. In many cultures this is reflected in the belief that Nature itself is a helping spirit. For example, the **Dagara** of West Africa recognize Dawera, the Nature spirit, as one of the five elements, each of which has a **shrine** and a priest(ess) tending the shrine. Dawera is all things, the animals, plants, and the geography. Dawera is called on to bring magic, major changes, and a connection to the **Great Mystery**. See also **Africa**.

Heinze, R. I. *Shamans of the 20th Century*. New York: Irvington Publishers, Inc., 1991.

Somé, M. P. *Of Water and the Spirit: Ritual, Magic and Initiation in the Life of an African Shaman*. New York: Penguin Group USA, Inc., 1995.

Vitebsky, Piers. *The Shaman*. London: Little, Brown and Company, 1995.

Navajo

See **Dineh**.

Neirika

The portal that unifies the **spirit** of all things and all worlds. All life came into being through the *neirika*. The *neirika* is the portal through which everyone passes at their death.

The **Huichol** believe that access to the *neirika* is located physically in the human head. The *neirika* is both a passageway and a barrier between the physical world and the world of spirit. *Neirika* is also translated to mean "mirror" and "face of the deity."

The *neirika* is represented as a stone disk (**power object**) and as a disk shape in Huichol **art**. This disk may resemble the **peyote** cactus, the **sacred** plant **entheogen** of the Huichol. The disk

shape *neirika* also represents the center of the four directions, emphasizing its orientation and place in the center of all things.

Myerhoff, B. G. *Peyote Hunt: The Sacred Journey of the Huichol Indians*. Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1974.

Schultes, Richard Evans, Albert Hofmann, and Christian Rätsch. *Plants of the Gods: Their Sacred, Healing, and Hallucinogenic Powers*. Rochester, VT: Healing Arts Press, 2001.

Neo-Shamanism

The definition of neo-shamanism is in flux. Neo-shamanism refers most often to the blending by contemporary Westerners of elements from different shamanic traditions with elements from other belief systems to create a new complex of beliefs, **rituals**, and practices. These beliefs, rituals, and practices are not necessarily directly related to **shamanism**. They are drawn from a wide range of shamanistic and non-shamanic spiritual forms in which the **shaman** is usually an idealized metaphor, not a practicing shaman in the literal sense.

Neo-shamanistic practices are eclectic and amorphous. Practitioners do not try to avoid the appropriation and mixing of rituals and practices from existing shamanic **cultures**. In this sense, neo-shamanism is not an aspect of **contemporary shamanism**, primarily because it does not involve a shaman.

Some scholars use neo-shamanism to refer to the revival of shamanism in traditionally shamanic cultures where the new practices of these shamans take non-traditional forms. In this sense neo-shamanism is an aspect of contemporary shamanism. It is the inherent nature of shamanic practices to transform over time. The revival of shamanism in indigenous shamanic cultures is a natural aspect of shamanism. See also **core shamanism**.

Nepal

Nepal is located on the southern slopes of the Himalayas, landlocked to the north by Tibet (now part of **China**), to the south and west by India, and to the east by Sikkim. Peoples of many ethnic groups live in Nepal, primarily speaking three languages: Munda (Austro-Asiatic), the **language** of the oldest inhabitants; Tibeto-Burmese, the language of the descendants of peoples from Tibet; and Indo-European.

In Nepal *bompos* (**shamans**) and *lamas* (**priests**) exist side by side and share similar rank and privilege, which is a unique situation in contemporary societies. The *bompo* and the *lama* both function professionally on a part-time basis, each representing different societal interests.

The *bompos* primarily use **embodiment** trance states during their **healing** rituals. They are conscious of their experiences and have complete recall of what the gods, **spirits**, and **ancestors** say during the **trance**. The *bompo's* **soul** is said to observe the trance state experience, standing back and watching him/herself perform. The *bompos* describe this state as "staying in the heart" while the gods speak through you. See also **Lamaism**; **ritual**; **Tamang**.

Peters, L. G. "An Experiential Study of Nepalese Shamanism." *Journal of Transpersonal Psychology* 13, no. 1 (1981):1–26.

———, and D. Price-Williams. "Towards an Experimental Analysis of Shamanism." *American Ethnologist* 7, no. 3 (1980): 397–413.

Nerfalsoq

Nerfalsoq is a West Greenland Eskimo term for a divining **angakok** (**shaman**). The *nerfalsoq* finds hidden or lost objects in a divination **ceremony** in which he or she does not use a **drum**. The *nerfalsoq* lies on his or her back to enter **trance** and discover the location of the object in question. See also **divination** and **Greenland**.

Lyon, William S. *Encyclopedia of Native American Shamanism: Sacred Ceremonies of North America*. Santa Barbara, CA: ABC-CLIO, 1998.

Netdim Maidü

The *netdim maidü* is a dreamer or **seer** of the Northern Maidu who is able to communicate with the **spirits** of nature and of the dead. A **yomuse** (**shaman**) was also a *netdim maidü*, however a *netdim maidü* was not necessarily a *yomuse*.

Lyon, William S. *Encyclopedia of Native American Shamanism: Sacred Ceremonies of North America*. Santa Barbara, CA: ABC-CLIO, 1998.

Ngaju Dyak

A Dyak people of southern Borneo. The **balian** and **basir** are the **shamans** of the Ngaju Dyak. The *balian* is female and the *basir* is a **gender-variant male transformed shaman**. Both the *balian* and *basir* embody the *sangiang*, deities, while in **trance**. Masters of trance, these shamans use **embodiment** trance states to allow the *sangiang* to speak through them directly and journeying trance states to travel to the **Upperworld** to visit the "village of the gods."

Neither the *balian* nor the *basir* embody the **souls** of the dead. These **spirits** are embodied by another class of practitioner called the *tukang tawur*. The *balian* and *basir* are "chosen" spontaneously by the *sangiang* and acquire their shamanic **powers** through this spiritual event. Traditionally, neither can serve as a shaman among the Ngaju without forging a **sacred** relationship with the divine in this way.

The Ngaju Dyak worship *Mahatala-Jata*, an androgynous deity. *Mahatala* is the male aspect, a hornbill who lives on a mountaintop and rules the Upperworld. *Jata* is the female aspect, a water snake who lives in the sea and rules the **Lowerworld**. The two aspects are joined by a jeweled bridge, the rainbow, and so

joined become the total Ngaju godhead, *Mahatala-Jata*. Both the *balian* and *basir* embody *Mahatala-Jata* while in trance and allow the Ngaju to access their godhead.

The *balian* and *basir* served the temple as hierodules, one who functions as a sacred sex partner for those who worship at the temple. During this sacred sexual activity, *balian* and *basir* were seen as the embodiment of *Mahatala-Jata*, the androgynous deity. Through sexual union with the *balian* or *basir*, a Ngaju man was brought into the presence of his god. See also **journey**.

Eliade, Mircea. *Shamanism: Archaic Techniques of Ecstasy*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1964.

Ngungi, the Crippled Smith

Ngungi, the **Zulu** God of Iron and **blacksmith** of the gods, has one lame leg and only one eye, both sacrificed in his efforts to gain **knowledge**. He is a great creator, artist, and symbol of the **sacrifice** demanded on any path of knowledge.

The story of Ngungi begins with the boy, then stupid, being raised by hippopotamuses. His father took pity on the boy and sent him to look for knowledge. The boy traveled far and wide, had many adventures, and many **teachers**. Ngungi gained great wisdom and knowledge because he learned from his adventures and from the sacrifices he was forced to make along the way.

Mutwa, Credo Vusa'mazulu. *Song of the Stars: The Lore of a Zulu Shaman*. Barrytown, NY: Station Hill Openings, 1996.

Non-ordinary Reality

Non-ordinary reality is **ordinary reality** as it is perceived from an **altered state of consciousness**. Non-ordinary reality is the aspect of life and the world that is normally invisible, which is perceived by the **shaman** while in **trance**. Also called

the spirit world, invisible world, spirit realm, **Dreamtime**, and Otherworld.

Accessing non-ordinary reality through an altered state of consciousness is basic to **shamanism**. An altered state of consciousness is a state of consciousness experienced as different from the baseline for that individual. The reality perceived from this cognitive state is non-ordinary reality.

Consciousness, in this sense, refers to an individual's total pattern of thinking and feeling at any given time. **Ordinary consciousness** is an individual's day-to-day experience of thinking, feeling, and wakefulness versus sleeping or **dreaming**. This ordinary consciousness serves as a baseline for that individual.

In an altered state of consciousness the individual feels a clear qualitative shift in his or her consciousness and a difference in the quality (or qualities) of how his or her mind is processing information and experiences. Mental functions are able to operate that do not operate at all in ordinary consciousness, and perceptual qualities are spontaneously accessed that have no ordinary counterpart.

The capacity to experience altered states is a basic, psychobiological human potential. All normal human beings have this ability, just as humans have the ability to **sing, dance**, and create **art**. Altered states arise from the manipulation of universal neurophysiological structures of the human body. Therefore access to non-ordinary reality is also universal.

Michael Harner, founding director of the **Foundation for Shamanic Studies**, explains that non-ordinary reality is part person and **culture** specific. The information and the experience of obtaining it in non-ordinary reality is tailor-made to the individual in the altered state. Other people may not perceive the same personal and cultural symbols.

However, behind these culturally diversified interpretations of non-ordinary reality a number of common

features do emerge. For example, the shamans of many cultures experience the **Land of the Dead** or the **Tree of Life** in non-ordinary reality. There are no objective structures in non-ordinary reality, in the sense that several observers will have identical experiences there. However, it is possible to find constant patterns in non-ordinary reality as it is experienced through altered states of consciousness.

When the shamans talk of non-ordinary reality, they do not mean to imply that it is disconnected from this world. They see non-ordinary reality as the "why" of this world. For the shaman, non-ordinary reality represents the true nature of things and the true causes of events in the world. The **power** of a shaman is directly proportional to his or her insight into non-ordinary reality. See also **journey** and **shamanic altered states of consciousness**.

Harner, Michael J. *The Way of the Shaman*. San Francisco: Harper-Collins, 1990.

Horrigan, Bonnie. "Shamanic Healing: We Are Not Alone. An Interview of Michael Harner." *Shamanism* 10, no. 1 (Spring-Summer 1997).

Nonosi

The *nonosi* were a special class of Southern Paiute **shamans** whose **hunting magic** enabled them to control the movements of game, thus aiding the hunters in successful hunts.

Lyon, William S. *Encyclopedia of Native American Shamanism: Sacred Ceremonies of North America*. Santa Barbara, CA: ABC-CLIO, 1998.

North

The north is a directional **energy** used by **shamans** in their **ritual** work and the creation of **sacred space** within ordinary **space**. The north is one of six directional energies (**east, south, west, north, above, and below**) which together

define the location of the seventh point, the center. Shamans must remain aware of their center at all times to keep from becoming lost while traveling in the boundless and ever-changing realms of **non-ordinary reality**.

Each of the directions is associated with an element, season, time of day, **color**, animal, diet, etc. These associations show both consistency and variation across **cultures**. The energy of the north is steady and rhythmic, like the heartbeat of Mother Earth. For many cultures, though not all, the element associated with the north is **earth**, the season is winter, the time is night, the **life cycle** passage is the child, the **power** is power, and the **journey** is one of wisdom and the discovery of essence.

North America

North America was home to a vast diversity of indigenous societies, ranging from small bands of hunter-gatherers in some areas to advanced civilizations of farming peoples in others. Ancient North American earthworks, five times as large as Stonehenge, reveal the remains of cities that existed at the time Rome was still a village in Italy. The histories of these varied peoples are found in their literature, oral traditions, **dances**, **rituals**, and ceremonies. Their stories, **songs**, and legends are living things, sources of **power** referred to in the first person.

Hundreds of different **languages**, economies, spiritual practices, and social patterns covered the continent. Any generalization about a cultural tradition is but a loose pattern that may not apply to a neighboring people while it does describe the practices of people farther away. The distinctions among native communities are many and the differences are vast. At the same time there are similarities, particularly related to **shamanism** and **healing** practices.

Shamans everywhere are guided by the **spirits** who are in no small part defined by the land and geography of a region. The shaman also plays a role in

the guidance of the people. People of similar geographic regions will be guided in similar ways through their shamans who are working with similar spirits. Variations in form will arise because of locale, language, and history, while the functions and practices of the rituals and ceremonies will be similar.

The spiritual attitudes that arise, which are the root of psychological and cultural attitudes, also develop in similar patterns. In indigenous North America, these patterns are two-way communication with **spirit** beings who grant power, **knowledge** of the planet, and the complex interrelatedness of the planet's ecosystems, and the profound understanding that all of these components are alive. These patterns led to a practice of mutual respect and interchange among spirits, humans, animals, and mythical beings, kinship, and an expectation and acceptance of the hand of spirit in all things.

As the Europeans embarked on a continent-wide effort to control and assimilate the indigenous peoples of North America, the shamans were systematically targeted and killed and their practices outlawed. This effectively stopped the innovative and generative aspect of shamanism. Until that time shamans across North America received direct intervention from **helping spirits** in their healing rituals and received new dances and songs to be used as tools for curing.

In some regions the practices and ceremonies that worked were kept and preserved as **medicine** for the present and future, often through the formation of **medicine societies**. The number, complexity, and importance of these ceremonies varied, though most were highly organized and elaborate among the more sedentary tribes who lived in permanent dwellings.

Even in the **cultures** with these powerful medicine societies, the individual shaman continued to practice. The individual shaman's unique contribution was the ability to communicate with the spirit world and receive new

rituals, songs, and other “medicines.” A shaman’s status was based on how effective his or her healing rituals were and the extent to which they refrained from practicing **sorcery**.

Illness in North America

The indigenous people of North America believed **illness** was caused by an individual or community falling out of harmony with the spirit world in some way. To avoid this, many tribes practiced an array of social **taboos** directing human interactions with Nature, the animals, and spirit power. Typical violations that could lead to illness were expressing jealousy, possessiveness, or greed; neglecting rituals and **prayers** of gratitude and honor to Nature and the spirit world; and inappropriate contact with supernatural power.

In California and the neighboring southwestern regions, illness was caused by **energy intrusions** translated as “**pains**” that were also the source of the shaman’s power. Witchcraft and sorcery were also common causes of illness and misfortune.

When illness or misfortune did arise, the people turned to the shaman to communicate with the spirit world to diagnose the cause and the remedy needed to restore health and harmony. The prescription could be a healing ritual with the shaman or a **ceremony** performed by a particular medicine society. Once harmony was restored to the spiritual aspect of the situation, shamans and often other healers attended to the physical aspects. Practicing with shamans were medicine men with herbal and plant remedies, bone setters, and healers who worked with a form of massage.

Many Shamans

In North America shamans of many **genders** were recognized: female, male, and **transformed shamans**, as well as the **gender-variant berdache** who was often a specialist in a type of curing. There are very few North American cultures that

did not use the unique powers of the transformed shaman. For the cultures that did, generally the transformed shamans are believed to be the strongest spiritually, the women are considered the next strongest, and the male shamans the least strong spiritually.

Berdache

The role of the **berdache** (*berdach*) is not unique to North America, however its manifestation and acceptance is widespread there. In North America, women also were persons of consequence; they were not a gender of second status to men. The rare exceptions to this generalization existed in the areas where the majority of food was supplied by men through hunting or fishing.

Indigenous women had high status as leaders and shamans, and there was no shame in a male taking on a women’s role and characteristics. A man was not giving up male privilege; he was showing his ability to transcend the limits of masculinity. The ability to master the realms of masculine and feminine greatly enhanced his status. More important, the “choice” to become a *berdache* is made by spirit. It is a recognition and expression of the true nature of that individual’s **soul**.

The *berdache* was often the one to oversee funeral rites. This involved preparing the bodies of the dead physically and spiritually, preparing the funeral rites, leading the **singing** and dancing rites, and often preparing and cooking for the wake. In some cultures like the Yokuts, the *berdache* alone prepared the bodies for burial and conducted the ceremonial dancing and singing rites.

The role of the *berdache* as an honored person of high order was found in cultures from the Pacific Northwest to the southeast and from the Great Lakes across the Plains and into the southwest. The word for *berdache* in each language, like *badé* of the Crow or *ayekkwew* of the Cree, meant simply “neither man nor woman.”

The taboo systems of the indigenous people rarely involved sexual behavior other than restrictions against incest and regulation of marriage relative to clan lines. Sexuality was not seen as solely for the purpose of reproduction nor was it restricted by the institution of marriage. There was a range of gender variation and related sexuality across North American cultures.

The indigenous peoples saw no opposition between matters of the spirit and of the body. Everything was held to be **sacred**. Sexuality was a gift from spirit, to be enjoyed and appreciated. The expression of sexuality was an expression of one's **original medicine**. There was a lighthearted ease of sexual experimentation among the sexes; every act of intercourse implied by definition the involvement of the souls of the partners and of spirit.

Art as Medicine

Across North America, song and dance were medicine; they were tools the shaman used to cure. The most elaborate ceremonies are still commonly known as "sings" and "dances." There are dances to mark, celebrate, empower, mourn, entertain, and heal. Dances and songs are handed down through the generations, a currency of the shamans and the Medicine Societies.

Music, then, played an important role in North American shamanic rituals and ceremonies. Wind and percussion were the two most common types of musical instruments. With the exception of the Apache, one had to travel south to find stringed instruments. The wind instruments are comprised of flutes and whistles; the whistles being used primarily by shamans giving **power displays** and treating illness and by warriors during war society and other ceremonials. The percussion included **drums** of several designs and various sorts of **rattles** designed to call on different spirit powers.

Masks were widely used throughout North America, particularly among the

cultures of the Pacific Northwest coast, northeastern, and the southwestern regions. Masks can be receptacles for spirit, and, when used in this way, they are **power objects**. The creation of the mask brings the spirit of the **vision** into the physical world for the whole community to see, to witness, and to experience the power. See also **death and dying**; **False Face Society**; **illness in North America**; **mask dances**; **medicine man**; *midewiwin*; **Shaking Tent Ceremony**.

Densmore, F. *The American Indians and Their Music*. New York: The Woman's Press, 1936.

Gunn, Allen P. *Grandmothers of the Light*. Boston: Beacon Press, 1991.

Williams, W. L. *The Spirit and the Flesh*. Boston: Beacon Press, 1992.

Wissler, C. *The American Indian*. New York: Oxford University Press, 1938.

Nti-si-tho

Nti-si-tho is the **Mazatec** name for *Teonanácatl*, which is several species of hallucinogenic **mushrooms** that have been employed as plant **entheogens** since ancient times in Mexico and Guatemala. *Si-tho* means "that which springs forth" and *Nti* is used to show reverence and endearment. Together *Nti-si-tho* means "the little mushroom (that) comes of itself, no one knows whence, like the wind that comes we know not whence nor why."

Nti-si-tho is associated with **water** and the rainy season because the mushrooms tend to sprout after the rains and, symbolically, because the mushroom-induced **trance** enables the **shaman** to travel the river of death to speak with the **spirits**.

Schultes, Richard Evans, Albert Hofmann, and Christian Rätsch. *Plants of the Gods: Their Sacred, Healing, and Hallucinogenic Powers*. Rochester, VT: Healing Arts Press, 2001.

Num

(Also: n|om) The spiritual **energy** that pervades and strengthens the lives of the **Ju|'hoansi**, also known as **!Kung** and **San**. When the Ju|'hoansi **dance** in **ritual** the *num* **power** rises out of the **earth** and travels up the spines of the dancers as it "boils." Those who have mastered the boiling *num* can direct it

through their hands for **healing**. The Ju|'hoansi **shaman** derives his power from within himself, from the *num*, not through the control or utilization of **helping spirits**.

Kalweit, Holger. *Shamans, Healers, and Medicine Men*. Boston: Shambhala Publications, 1992.



Oak

The oak tree is the Celtic **Tree of Life** and a central part of the Celtic cosmology and **culture**. The mighty oak serves this role because it is believed that only good energies can pass through it. Therefore, the Celtic **shaman** must stay on very good terms with the oak and pay it tremendous tribute to be allowed to use it for moving between the worlds.

The Celtic shaman draws strength from the Great Oak, connected through it to all things and able to travel to all places between the worlds. The shaman stands in the center of the Celtic universe when he or she stands in the center of the Great Tree.

Celtic mythology is filled with heroes who draw strength from the Tree of Life in its many forms. Irish hero Cuchulainn strapped himself to a stone monolith when his last battle was going badly. Connected in this way to the Tree of Life, he drew the strength needed for battle from it.

Matthews, John, et al. *The Celtic Shaman: A Handbook*. Rockport, MA: Element Books Ltd., 1991.

Object Intrusion

One of the major causes of **disease** among the indigenous peoples of **Asia**, **Africa**, **South America**, and **North America**, with the exception of some **Eskimo** tribes who believe that **soul loss** is the cause of **illness**. The illness is believed to be caused by an **energy intrusion** that has inserted itself into the body of the patient. See also **extraction** and **pains**.

Lyon, William S. *Encyclopedia of Native American Shamanism: Sacred Ceremonies of North America*. Santa Barbara, CA: ABC-CLIO, 1998.

Odin

The great Norse **shaman** who hung himself from the **Tree of Life** *Yggdrasil*, the Ash, for nine days and nine nights to obtain wisdom and shamanic **powers**. The understanding Odin received from the spirit world while hanging in **trance** enabled him to unravel the secrets of the **runes**, a divinatory alphabet. After this event Odin was able to master the arts of the *seidr*, a Norse **divination** ritual performed only by female *volvas* to access the secret of wisdom from the spirit world. See also **ritual**.

Cowan, Tom. *Fire in the Head: Shamanism and the Celtic Spirit*. San Francisco: HarperCollins, 1993.

Hoppál, M., and O. J. von Sadovsky. *Shamanism: Past and Present* (Vol. 1 & 2). Fullerton, CA: International Society for Trans-Oceanic Research, 1989.

Offering

An offering is a symbolic manifestation of a **prayer**, or gratitude, extended to the **spirits**. Traditional offerings usually take time to create. During that time, the individual concentrates on the message of the prayer so that the offering embodies that message and extends it into the spirit world. The primary purpose of an offering is to increase the efficacy of whatever prayer, **ritual**, or other **sacred** activity the individual is engaged in.

The purpose of an offering is fairly consistent cross-culturally. However, the form of the offering varies **culture** to culture. For example, typical offerings would be flowers, rice, and rice wine in **Southeast Asia**, prayer flags in Tibet, *Coca* leaves in **South America**, the best portions of the harvest or a feast in **Africa**, or prayer sticks or **tobacco** ties in

different regions of **North America**. In some situations a ritual or ritual celebration may function as a communal offering. **Song** is one form of offering that transcends the differences of cultures and times. See also **embodiment**.

Lyon, William S. *Encyclopedia of Native American Shamanism: Sacred Ceremonies of North America*. Santa Barbara, CA: ABC-CLIO, 1998.

Offerings, Hallucinogenic

The shaman's use of sacred **plant hallucinogens** should not be confused with offerings brought for the shaman's helping spirit. Mind-altering substances, like alcohol and opium, may be consumed by the **shaman** while in **trance**. In such cases the helping spirit is in full **possession** of the shaman's body and the **spirit** is "consuming" the substance.

The substances are brought and consumed as offerings for the spirit to entice the spirit to help the patient. The shaman is not affected physically by the often heroic amounts consumed by the spirit through the shaman's body in such sessions. When the spirit leaves the shaman's body, all potential chemical effects of the offerings leave with the spirit.

Heinze, R. I. *Shamans of the 20th Century*. New York: Irvington Publishers, Inc., 1991.

Ogham

The ancient alphabet of Ireland and the western parts of ancient Britain. Ogham letters are used in magic and **divination**. They are believed to have been a tool for the **Celtic** shamans, the **Druids** (keepers of the folk wisdom), and the bards (poet-singers whose role it was to keep the tribal history, traditions, genealogy, spiritual laws, and to honor the deeds of great leaders in verse). The use of the ogham symbols was passed on through these oral traditions as part of the **training** in each of these callings.

Ogham is known as the secret **language** of poets or the tree alphabet, since each of the letters is called by a Gaelic tree name. It is an alphabet of twenty original letters plus five more, probably added at a later date; together they are considered *eachra exsi*, the keys of **knowledge**.

The creation of the ogham is attributed to *Ogma Sun-Face*, the god of inspiration and poetry. The original order has also been changed over time and from use. There are many different lists of letters that ascribe different meanings to them and, in so doing, imply different systems of knowledge that can be accessed through the letters. There are lists that relate the ogham letters to systems such as desirable human qualities, body parts, **trees**, riddles, and elements of the shamanic experience. There are probably many more lists that are lost or were never recorded.

The complexity of this simple alphabet of slash marks and shapes comes from the vast and multilayered range of symbolic reference required to be able to not only read the letters and **words**, but to actually derive the intended meaning. The translations of ogham writings are full of magical nuances that tie the alphabet to the magic of the **shamans**, bards, and wizards of the time.

Divination

The ogham was used in divination by inscribing the ogham letters on billets of wood, drawing or casting the billets, and interpreting the resulting symbols. There are specific records of it being used to determine the sex of an unborn child and guilt or innocence in crimes with no witnesses.

The ogham is unique in that instead of having separate characters, the symbols of ogham are arranged along a line known as the *druim*. The characters are all in contact with this line, either above, below, or through it. Conventionally the ogham is written vertically from bottom to top. If written horizontally, as on an artifact for example, the

upper side of the *druim* is considered the left and the lower side considered the right. The ogham script is written and read from bottom to top or left to right.

One very important esoteric aspect of ogham is the use of certain objects, like **birds** and **colors**, or places, like pools of **water**, to expand the meaning of the letters. Each letter also corresponds with a weapon or other military equipment, sciences, cosmology, spiritual states of being, times of the day, herbs, etc. In former times, individuals initiated into Bardic or Druidic practices could communicate with one another simply by mentioning the animals, birds, or weapons that corresponded with the letters. Unsuspecting listeners could not understand what was being said. An example of esoteric ingenuity was the creation of an ogham sign language known only to those initiated in its use.

The mystical basis of the oghams is in the trees that correspond with each symbol of the alphabet. The names are based on archaic Gaelic tree names. Like all the magical alphabets (Greek, Hebrew of the Kabbalah, Nordic **runes**, etc.), each individual ogham has not only a name and **sound**, but represents a specific object or quality. A summary of the meanings of the twenty original ogham letters follows.

The first letter is Beth, named for the birch tree, which is associated with **purification** and the color white. Beth is one of the month oghams, of which there are thirteen (a relic of the old way of reckoning **time** according to the phases of the **moon**). Magically, Beth is used to protect against all harm, physical and spiritual. It allows the bad to be dealt with and cleared away so that a new beginning can take place, unhindered by leftovers and unfinished business.

Luis is named for the rowan or quickbeam tree, traditionally considered a magical plant, the **Tree of Life**, and a tree of 'quickening.' The bird associated with Luis is the duck; the color

gray, and the festival Imbolc, celebrated on February 1. This time is the quickening of the year when the days are noticeably longer after the darkness of winter.

Fearn is named for the alder tree, which symbolically bridges the space between the **Lowerworld** in the **earth** and the **Upperworld** in the air. The tree is also connected with **sword**-making and prized by smiths for giving the best charcoal for **metal**-smelting. The color is blood-red and the bird the seagull. The gull's calls were imitated to summon the wind and the alder was used for making whistles also used to call up the wind.

Saille is named for the Sally tree or white willow, which is associated with the growth of lunar **power** and rooting in water. Saille is the ogham of linking, a watery symbolism which brings itself into harmony with the flow of events, most notably the phases of the moon. In divination its power is great at night, except when the moon is visible during the day. Esoterically this eminent flexibility demonstrates a harmonious amenability to the conditions to which it is subjected. The bird is the hawk.

Nuin (Nion) is named for the gray and the black **ash**, which are associated with rebirth and the passage between the inner and outer worlds. In the Norse traditions the ash is the **World Tree**, Yggdrassil, the cosmic axis that links the Upper, Middle, and Lower worlds. The bird is the snipe and the color is clear.

Huath (Uath) is named for the whitethorn or hawthorn, the Goddess's tree of sexuality. The name means 'terrible' and refers to the destroying aspect of the Threefold Goddess. Huath is the ogham of protection against all ills, invoking the power of the Otherworld. The bird is the night-crow and the color is purple.

Duir, is named for the common **oak**, considered the most powerful tree in many European spiritual traditions due to its connection with the **sky** gods. For the Druids, every part of the oak is **sacred**. The color is black and the bird

the wren, also sacred to the Druids. Magically, this important ogham signifies strength. Traditionally, it is the ogham that enables one to see the invisible and to become invisible; to allow entry of those who should enter and to exclude those who should not. In a magical way, it can also refer to things of great strength that are hidden from view at present.

Tinne is named for the holly tree, the cypress, or the rowan. Magically, the character Tinne brings strength and power, but in a balanced manner. It has a strong male element, more specifically connected with fatherhood and the consequent ability for **souls** to be reborn. The bird is the starling and the color gray-green.

Coll is named for the hazel tree, which is associated with knowledge and gaining information. The hazel is also associated with the shaman, the crane, and the color nut-brown.

Quert is named for the crabapple, which is associated with the celebration of the eternity of life. The color is mouse-brown or apple-green and the bird is the hen.

Muin (Min) is named for the thorny thicket and the bird is the titmouse, a bird of thickets. The color is variegated. Magically, it signifies the ability to range over a wide area and gather together those things that might be needed. Once gathered together, these things are assimilated, leading to inner development.

Gort is named for the native ivy, most particularly in its flowering season. The color is blue and the bird the mute swan. Symbolically and magically, Gort represents the changes that are necessary for growth and the requirement that all things be related to the earth.

Ngetal is named for the reed used by the scribes of ancient Ireland to make pens. Ngetal is the ogham of Sashimi, the festival of the land and the beginning of the new year in the Celtic calendar. The greatest power of Ngetal is as the preserver. As the pen that preserves

memory and knowledge, it also signifies conscious precision and the maintenance of order in **chaos**. The bird is the goose and the color is yellowish green.

Straif is named for the blackthorn or sloe tree, a tree of major magical powers connected with punishment and strife. Straif signifies power in both the visible and invisible worlds. It provides the strength one needs to resist and defeat adversity and to control or ward off supernatural and paranormal powers. Straif is perhaps the most powerful ogham for overthrowing all resistance to one's will. The color is purple-black and the bird the thrush.

Ruis is named for the elder or bourtree, another tree of great power in divination. The bark and flowers were also used for their **healing** properties. The elder is held sacred for its connection with the dark aspect of the Mother Goddess, the Hag. Symbolically, Ruis signifies the three aspects of time present in the Threefold Goddess. It is an ogham of the unity of all time. The color is red and the bird is the rook.

Ailm is named for the elm tree. Ailm represents the god-like strength that one needs to rise above adversity, like the elm tree, to create a viewpoint from a higher level: the god-like capabilities of healing and perception of future trends. The color is blue and the bird the lapwing.

On (Ohn) is named for the gorse of furze, which can be found in flower in almost every month of the year. Thus it is an ogham of continuous fertility. It represents the carrying on of one's activities despite the surrounding conditions. Magically it represents the collecting together and retaining of one's strength through adversity. The color is saffron yellow and the bird the cormorant.

Ur is named for the heather, which means fresh, new, and moist. Magically Ur brings this luck and freshness to any venture to which it is applied. It becomes the entrance point to the inner worlds. The color is purple and the bird the skylark.

Eadha is named for the aspen or white poplar, known to be hardy and able to live in a wide range of habitats. The oghams speaks of this quality of hardy resistance to variety of seemingly inhospitable conditions. Magically it is seen as a preventer of death. It is a facilitator of the individual's curative powers, providing access to the real essence that underlies the sometimes misleading outer form. The color is silvery white and the bird the whistling swan.

Ioho (Idho, Iubhar) is named for the yew tree which is green throughout the year. It is considered the tree of eternal life, sacred to various divinities and saint of death and regeneration. The ogham has the meaning of the unity of death and life, the rebirth which comes, figuratively or physically, as a result of death. The color is greenish brown and the bird is the eaglet.

Like other alphabets, the oghams are arranged in a specific character order. Originally the twenty characters appear to have been arranged in four divisions of five. Today twenty-five characters are used and arranged in five groups of five. The last five characters: *Koad*—the sacred grove; *Oir*—the gooseberry, *Ui*—the honeysuckle, *Pethbol*—the guelder rose; and *Péine* (also *Amancholl*, *Xi*, *Mór*)—the witch hazel, are diphthongs. Their magical components are less well established than those of the first twenty characters.

Matthews, John, et al. *The Celtic Shaman: A Handbook*. Rockport, MA: Element Books Ltd., 1991.

Pennick, N. *Magical Alphabets*. York Beach, ME: Samuel Wieser, Inc., 1992.

Ogichidanimidiwin

The *ogichidanimidiwin*, or **Ojibwa** Chief Dance, is performed to enlist the aid of *manitous*, who are the protectors of the particular group of people, in the **healing** of a sick person or in warding off impending sickness. The *ogichidanimidiwin* is performed when someone

dreams that sickness was about to invade the community, which was a common and devastating occurrence after the Europeans came to **North America**. It was also performed when the **spirits** prescribed the **ritual** as a cure for a patient's **illness**. See also **dance** and **dreaming**.

Lyon, William S. *Encyclopedia of Native American Shamanism: Sacred Ceremonies of North America*. Santa Barbara, CA: ABC-CLIO, 1998.

Oglala

See **Lakota**.

Ohgiwe

The Feast of the Dead or **Ghost Dance** of the **Iroquois**, one of three major rites of the *diehoono* or Tutelo. Traditional Iroquois believe that an aspect of the **soul** can remain in the earthly realm as a ghost after death. The *ohgiwe* is performed the day after the burial, which is the fourth day after death, to appease this **spirit** and release it from the earthly plane. Otherwise the ghost wanders among the living, possessing them and causing **illness**. If this is the case, then the *ohgiwe* is performed as a cure.

The *ohgiwe* is performed twice a year in the spring and fall as a form of preventative **medicine**. Through the **ritual** acts that comprise the night-long *ohgiwe*, the ancestral spirits are appeased and any ghosts are cleared from the earthly realm. The *ohgiwe* also functions as a private **healing** ritual for those afflicted with ghost sickness. In this case part of the ritual is held in the lodge of the patient.

Lyon, William S. *Encyclopedia of Native American Shamanism: Sacred Ceremonies of North America*. Santa Barbara, CA: ABC-CLIO, 1998.

Ojibwa

(Also Ojibway, Chippewa, Chippeway, Anishinabeg) The Ojibwa, an **Algonquian**

people of the northern and western Great Lakes region of **North America**, were one of the largest nations of **First Peoples** north of Mexico. Some Ojibwa (the last syllable is pronounced 'way') prefer their more ancient name for themselves, **Anishinabe**, meaning "we people." The Ojibwa joined with the Ottawa and the Potawatomi in a loose confederacy known to white traders as the Three Fires. In the histories of each of these tribes they were originally one tribe.

In traditional Ojibwa **culture** every person acquires a guardian *manitou*, or **helping spirit**, through personal **vision quests**. The powers of these *manitou* are drawn on for protection, identity within the clan, and success in hunting, beadwork, pottery, childbirth, etc. Thus, each person maintained a relationship with spirit and the **sacred** without normally consulting **shamans** for guidance. The Ojibwa shaman was a specialist, distinguished by the amount of power obtained from a number of *manitou* and his or her ability to direct that power into healing, conjuring, or **divination**.

In North America the shaman and the **priest** have distinct and sometimes antagonistic functions. Among the Ojibwa, this distinction is sharply drawn. The priest can be considered a keeper of **ceremony** and the priest's position is secured through **knowledge**. The shaman can be considered a creator of **ritual**. The shaman's position is secured through the ability to enter trance states and bring the powers of the supernatural to the aid of humans.

The shamans of the Ojibwa evolved over time, beginning with the archaic *meda*, or **family shaman**. Each isolated Ojibwa band often depended on their family shaman to cure the sick, divine for the hunt, and generally meet all the pressing needs of the group. The *meda* created a **drum** to use for inducing trance. The drum also represented the mythic cedar tree that is the cosmic axis that connects the mysterious realms, providing a path for the *meda* and

the healing power of the *manitou* (**spirits**).

The *tcisaki*, or *djessakid*, evolved as a specialist in performing divination and the **Shaking Tent Ceremony**. The *tcisaki* constructed the conjuring lodge of tree poles as instructed by his or her *manitou*. One tree, with its branches remaining, extends higher than the others, suggesting again the mythic cedar tree, the path for the *manitou* the *tcisaki* calls on in the divining ritual.

Later the **Midewiwin Society** evolved from the **training** and practices of Ojibwa shamans. The Midewiwin Society coexisted with the practices of the *tcisaki* and other specialists. The Midewiwin Society is one of the oldest healing societies of the Ojibwa. It is known for performing the *midewiwin*, the great healing ritual. This ceremony is not found among the northern Ojibwa or the Ojibwa who migrated to the southeast.

Mide, which means "mystic" or "mystically powerful," is one of three classes of Ojibwa shamans. These shamans are the healers who call on **helping spirits** to effect cures during the *midewiwin* ritual. They also administer herbal remedies, which are always empowered with a **medicine** song. These **songs** are given to the shaman in **visions** and **journeys** by the *manitou*. In some areas the Ojibwa had an uneasy relationship with the *mide* who were seen as a potential threat because their power enabled them to overcome those who lacked magical skills.

Primarily the *midewiwin* (shamans) were called on for healing. The Ojibwa looked to five possible causes for **illness: sorcery, spirit intrusion, energy intrusions**, breach of **taboo**, or **soul loss**.

Midewiwin Paraphernalia

The Ojibwa shaman did not have a common **costume**, though some societies wore costumes while others wore nothing. Records of ceremonial songs were kept in pictographs on birch bark scrolls for teaching. Round hand drums

with straight strikers, various **rattles**, and a large drum carved from a log and partially filled with **water** were used. The water drum was played with a curved striker primarily during *midewiwin* rituals and ceremonies.

There is a persistent notion that is difficult to trace in the literature that the *midewiwin* had four higher, secret levels and that the chief *midewiwin* practitioners and **teachers** were women. The *midewiwin* teaching is the path of the mysteries, and service to that path required a willingness to earn the power of the *manitou* by doing them favors, the ability to fast, to **dream**, to trust the supernatural workings of luck, the possession of a powerful sense of the absurd, and an unswerving self-discipline that often meant a lifetime of abstinence from certain foods and activities enjoyed by others.

The *a-go-kwa*, the gender-variant shaman of the Ojibwa, was called to the role in dreams, like other Ojibwa shamans. After a boy dreamed the *a-go-kwa* dream, he would forsake all male customs and adopt the dress and mannerisms of women. This transformation of **gender** would continue throughout his training and his lifetime.

Soul

The Ojibwa believe that the development of the **soul** is a central duty in the life of every man and woman. They experience the soul as an immortal substance that must grow while residing in the finite and perishable physical body. The growth of the soul is inspired by the harmony of heart and spirit achieved in life.

Death

At death, the Ojibwa believe that the shaman's help is necessary for the soul. The souls of the newly deceased need guidance to rise to the challenges of reconciling their life and to overcome the dangers along their journey to the Otherworld. The shaman is central in the rituals performed to entice the soul out of the routines of their old life and

to appease them so that, upon accepting their death, they do not continue to demand attention from their relatives, take revenge on the living, or torment their enemies in their sleep. It was the shaman's role to enter into the spirit realms, to accompany soul on its journey, and to assure the successful completion of that journey. See also **death and dying**.

Grim, John A. *The Shaman*. Norman, OK: University of Oklahoma Press, 1988.

Gunn, Allen P. *Grandmothers of the Light*. Boston: Beacon Press, 1991.

Kalweit, Holger. *Shamans, Healers, and Medicine Men*. Boston: Shambhala Publications, 1992.

Lyon, William S. *Encyclopedia of Native American Healing*. New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 1996.

Williams, W. L. *The Spirit and the Flesh*. Boston: Beacon Press, 1992.

Ojuna

The masculine form of **shaman** in the Yakut **language**. **Udoyan** is the feminine. See also **Yakut**.

Ololiuqui

Ololiuqui, made from the seeds of *Turbina corymbosa*, is a principal **plant hallucinogen** for the Chinatec, **Mazatec**, and other peoples of the Oaxacan region of Mexico. Its use can be traced back to the **sacred** ceremonies of the **Aztecs**, who call it **coaxihuitl**, meaning green snake or snake plant. *Turbina corymbosa*, or *Rivea corymbosa* as it is also known, is found in the warm, tropical zones of the Americas.

Turbina corymbosa is a large, woody vine with heart-shaped leaves and many bell-shaped flowers. The flowers, three-quarters to one-and-a-half inches long, are white with greenish stripes. The round, brown seeds are hallucinogenic and analgesic.

The Spanish invaders of Mexico found the **ritual** use of *Ololiuqui*

offensive. The ecclesiastics were particularly intolerant of the practice and proceeded to suppress and eradicate it. The people took the sacred rituals into the hills, saving the essence of the rituals and merging other elements of their spiritual practice with the Christianity imposed on them.

Use

The Chinatec name for *Ololiuqui* is *A-mu-kia*, meaning “medicine for divination.” *Ololiuqui* is used in a ritual to communicate with the spirit world for **divination** and **diagnosis**. When an individual is entranced, he or she is in communication with the *Ololiuqui* spirit who speaks through the individual. The message is interpreted by the **shaman**.

When *Ololiuqui* is to be given to the patient, the shaman prepares the infusion and administers it at night. The source of the patient’s problems and the appropriate remedy are diagnosed by the shaman from an interpretation of the patient’s **words** and **visions** during the course of the intoxication.

Turbina corymbosa is used for a wide variety of medicinal purposes from curing syphilis to removing tumors, to stimulating the **healing** of dislocations, fractures, and pelvic problems in women. The powdered seeds also have a variety of medicinal uses.

Preparation

Thirteen seeds are ground and placed in a gourd of **water** to make an infusion. The particulate matter is strained from the drink and the infusion is consumed or added to an alcoholic beverage and consumed.

Active Principle

The active principles of *Ololiuqui* are the lysergic acid alkaloids, lysergic acid amide, and lysergic acid hydroxyethylamide. They are indole alkaloids. Lysergic acid amide differs only slightly in structure from lysergic acid diethylamide or LSD. LSD is a semi-synthetic compound and the most potent known hallucinogen. LSD is one hundred times

more potent than the usual dose of *Ololiuqui*.

Ritual of Receiving the Plant Spirit, or Plant Medicine

Traditionally, *Ololiuqui* is administered to a single individual in a secluded, quiet place at night. The shaman prepares the hallucinogenic infusion, creates the ritual space, and helps the patient find the correct focus for his or her encounter with the spirit of *Ololiuqui*. The patient drinks *Ololiuqui* and remains secluded, waiting for the spirit to reveal what he or she needs to know. After the **trance** has run its course, the shaman interprets the cause of the **illness** and the necessary remedies from the patient’s experiences with the spirit of *Ololiuqui* while in trance.

Characteristics of the Induced Altered State

Intoxication begins rapidly, giving over quickly to visual hallucinations. In the early stages, giddiness may be followed by a weariness. Full trance is characterized by a state of “sleep” that is filled with visions, often grotesque, and occasionally movement as if sleepwalking.

The intoxication lasts approximately three hours. During that time the individual is dimly aware of his or her surroundings, which is the reason *Ololiuqui* is traditionally administered in solitude. There are seldom unpleasant side effects. See also **altered states of consciousness** and **Morning Glory**.

Schultes, R. E. *Plants of the Gods: Their Sacred, Healing, and Hallucinogenic Powers*. Rochester, VT: Healing Arts Press, 2001.

Omi

The **soul** of the **Tungus** after death. **Chanjan**, the soul of the living, becomes *omi* after death. *Omi* means *becoming or being formed*. After death the *omi* are escorted by ancestral **spirits** to the land of the *Omi*, the source of the Tungus river of kinship, where they reside until they choose to reincarnate.

If the ancestral escort does not appear or if the *omi* escapes its escort, the **shaman** must intervene and convey the *omi* to its proper destination. Otherwise the *omi* can cause harm to the living or slip into the body of a woman and try to reincarnate before its time. See also **psychopomp**.

Kalweit, Holger. *Dreamtime and Inner Space: The World of the Shaman*. Boston: Shambhala Publications, 1988.

Omphalos

Omphalos is the Greek word for navel and refers to a focal point or central part, as in the umbilicus. Symbolically, the **Tree of Life** is said to grow at the omphalos, the place of connection to all things. Literally, omphalos often refers to a **sacred** stone found in temples or **shrines**. Typically, the stone is shaped like a beehive, associating the stone and the temple with the goddess in one of her most ancient forms, the queen bee, civilizer of mankind.

Omphalos can also describe a beehive-shaped sanctuary space found in the **initiation** histories of many **cultures**. For example in India, it is called a *stupa*. The shape of the egg or beehive is a symbol of the transformation, birth, and rebirth through initiation.

The sign associated with the omphalos and its symbolic nature as the **earth** navel, the point of connection of all things, is a small **circle** or dot within a circle. It is found painted on the heads of **frame drums**, worked into jewelry, and stamped into coins.

Redmond, L. *When the Drummers Were Women: A Spiritual History of Rhythm*. New York: Three Rivers Press, 1997.

Oneane

Corn pollen used as a sacred **offering** by the Zuni. See also **sacred**.

Lyon, William S. *Encyclopedia of Native American Shamanism: Sacred Ceremonies of North America*. Santa Barbara, CA: ABC-CLIO, 1998.

Onotcikewinini

Divining **shamans** of the **Ojibwa** who use no special **paraphernalia** to foretell coming events, such as the imminent arrival of travelers to the camp, the movement of enemies, or the coming of rain, for example. These **seers** are distinguished from the *djessakid* who perform the **Shaking Tent Ceremony** for **divination**. The *onotcikewinini*, which means “foretelling man,” coexists with the *djessakid* in Ojibwa **culture**.

Lyon, William S. *Encyclopedia of Native American Shamanism: Sacred Ceremonies of North America*. Santa Barbara, CA: ABC-CLIO, 1998.

Ordinary Consciousness

Consciousness, in this context, is an individual’s total pattern of thinking and feeling at any given time. Ordinary consciousness is an individual’s day-to-day experience of thinking and feeling. It is the experience of being awake versus sleeping or **dreaming**. This ordinary consciousness serves as a baseline for that individual from which to differentiate **altered states of consciousness**.

A discrete state of consciousness, like ordinary consciousness, is a system. This system has two basic components—structures and energies. Structures are the various human potentials that are expressed, suppressed, tapped, or untapped. Energies are the energetic flow routes of awareness, attention (partially directable awareness), and biological and psychic energies that keep the structures connected and interacting with one another in a relatively stable and habitual pattern.

Ordinary consciousness is a construction, not a given. This construction has a very large number of arbitrary

aspects in it whose value are personally and/or culturally relative. Humans almost universally assume, consciously or unconsciously, that their culturally created consciousness is reality. This assumption often extends to the belief that their ordinary state of consciousness is somehow the best or the optimal state of consciousness for all.

However, ordinary is a relative term and the construction of consciousness is a somewhat arbitrary process relative to person and **culture**. Each individual achieves an ordinary consciousness as part of the process of learning to function within their culture's consensus reality (the reality a human learns to perceive as it is defined and perceived by the powerful forces that influence humans) during their process of enculturation.

Ordinary consciousness is the state of consciousness the **shaman** leaves from and returns to after working in **trance**. See also **energy**.

Tart, Charles, T. "The Basic Nature of Altered States of Consciousness: A Systems Approach." *Journal of Transpersonal Psychology* 8, no. 1 (1976): 45–64.

Ordinary Reality

Reality as it is perceived from the cognitive state of normal consciousness. It is a consensus reality that is defined within each **culture**. What is ordinary to someone from one culture may appear to be **non-ordinary reality** to someone from another. There is no absolute ordinary reality.

Ordinary consciousness varies from person to person and may vary considerably between different ethnic groups. Some cultures have a highly refined awareness of different mental states. For example, the Buddhist Abhidhamma lists one hundred and eight different states of mental cultivation. Contemporary Western cultures recognize three states of consciousness: ordinary, sleeping, or **dreaming**. Other

states of consciousness are considered symptoms of mental **illness**.

Orenda

The **Iroquois** term for the mystical force that is inherent in all matter and **spirits**. It is the magic in power or the potential inherent in power. *Orenda* is an anglicized word used by scholars for the Iroquois word that varies in the different dialects of the people of the Iroquois nations.

Orenda is a mystical force that cannot be understood with the rational mind, but can be manipulated to create change in the physical or spiritual realms. *Orenda* is the force the **shaman** manipulates to create **healing**. *Orenda* is neutral and can be directed by people to benevolent or malevolent ends.

Lyon, William S. *Encyclopedia of Native American Shamanism: Sacred Ceremonies of North America*. Santa Barbara, CA: ABC-CLIO, 1998.

Original Medicine

Original medicine is the unique quality of personal **power** that arises from the combination of talents, gifts, and challenges innate to each individual. All **medicine** powers arise from the consciousness that is innate in all things in our living universe. An individual may be granted additional medicine powers as a result of a profound life transformation, dedicated work, or a successful **vision quest** or **initiation**.

When an individual is fully expressing who they are they are said to be "full of power" or "expressing their medicine." The original medicine of each individual is duplicated nowhere else on the planet; it is the uniqueness of each human. While the presence of original medicine within each individual is a given, whether or not an individual will live fully and bring his or her original medicine to the world is not. Individuals who do not live in integrity with their original medicine eventually suffer **soul loss**.

Arrien, Angeles. *The Four-fold Way: Walking the Paths of the Warrior, Teacher, Healer, and Visionary*. San Francisco: HarperCollins, 1993.

Oruncha

See **Arunta (Aranda)**.

Oshadageaa

(Also *haguks*—Cayuga and Onondaga). The **Seneca** term for Dew Eagles, giant spirit eagles or “cloud dwellers” who are the patron spirit of the **Iroquois** Eagle Society. *Oshadageaa* have the **power** to restore vital life force to the dying, the elderly, and those afflicted with wasting **diseases**. The Eagle Society performs the Eagle Dance in cases of serious, life-threatening **illness**.

The **healing** powers of the *oshadageaa* are invoked during this healing **ritual** through the **singing** of a **power song** called *gane ondaadon* (“shaking a fan”) in Seneca and *ganegwae gaena* (“striking a fan song”) in Onondaga. Thus the Eagle Dance is also called the Striking Dance. See also **dance** and **song**.

Lyon, William S. *Encyclopedia of Native American Shamanism: Sacred Ceremonies of North America*. Santa Barbara, CA: ABC-CLIO, 1998.

Otavalan

See **Quechua**.

Otgun

(Also *oki, okki, otkon, utgon*) The use of **Orenda** for malevolent purposes.

Orenda, the **Iroquois** term for the mystical force that is inherent in all matter and **spirits**, is neutral. It can be directed by people to benevolent or malevolent ends. *Otgun* is also used to refer to malevolent beings, animals, and people. In some groups it refers to a **spirit** that has attached itself to a **shaman**.

Lyon, William S. *Encyclopedia of Native American Shamanism: Sacred Ceremonies of North America*. Santa Barbara, CA: ABC-CLIO, 1998.

Out-of-Body Experience (OBE)

The out-of-body experience (OBE) is an **altered state of consciousness** characterized by the perception of all objects arranged in such a way that they are being viewed from a point of consciousness outside of the physical body. The experience of observing doctors performing an operation on one's own body from the ceiling of the operating room is an example of an anesthesia-induced OBE. There is a clear distinction between OBEs and the **trance** states of the **shaman** due to the different phenomenology of each experience. An OBE is experienced relative to the physical world and the **soul** moves invisibly through the physical world. The shaman's trance states are experienced relative to the spirit world and the shaman's soul moves freely into other realms as well as in the physical.

Kalweit, Holger. *Dreamtime and Inner Space: The World of the Shaman*. Boston: Shambhala Publications, 1988.

P

Pachakuti

The time of transformation. According to ancient **Inka** prophecy the end of the 20th century is the time of gathering and reintegration of the Peoples of the **earth**. It is a time of upheaval and great change that will make it fertile for a new seed of awareness and bring profound alterations in the way humanity perceives the core structures of the universe.

The **Q'ero**, descendants of the Inka who live 17,000 feet up the mist-enshrouded mountains of south-central Peru, recognize that there are three types of human intelligence/**power**: *yachay* (**knowledge**) developed in the Europeans, *munay* (love and feeling) developed in the indigenous South Americans, and *llankay* (the ability to manifest) developed in the North Americans. Each of these peoples needs the intelligence and power of the other two to be whole. This time of change, *Pachakuti*, will create the potential for Wholeness by bringing all three powers together.

Pachakuti is a very important moment for all humanity, particularly those who have strayed from a balanced life of purpose and meaning. *Pachakuti* is a time to realign the world in renewed order and harmony and to open to new ways of seeing the world. To this end the Q'ero now open their teachings to all others in preparation for the day the Eagle of the North and the Condor of the South fly together again. See also **Andes, South America; North America; South America**.

Paho

(Also: *baho*, *paaho*, *paavaho* [pl.]) A Hopi prayer stick that is made to embody a **prayer** for moisture. There are many types of *paavaho* made by different Hopi for different purposes in different ways. Only persons with authority and the required spiritual **power** can make ceremonial *paavaho*. Most *paavaho* are made from a required type of stick, specific **feathers** in a particular **sacred** arrangement, and hand-spun cotton twine.

Paholawu is the **ritual** of making a *paho* and it is a sacred undertaking usually conducted in a kiva. The success of Hopi ceremonies is based in part on the prayers given to the *paavaho* as they are made. Once assembled the *paho* is sanctified by smudging it with smoke, sprinkling it with cornmeal, spraying it with honey, or some combination of these acts. Completed *paavaho* are stuck into the ground at designated sites, some of which might host several hundred *paavaho* at a time. See also **ceremony; embodiment; spirits**.

Lyon, William S. *Encyclopedia of Native American Shamanism: Sacred Ceremonies of North America*. Santa Barbara, CA: ABC-CLIO, 1998.

Pains

The indigenous peoples of north-central and north-coastal California have a view of **disease**-causing agents that is unique to **North America**. **Illness** is believed to be caused by the intrusion into the body of "pains," as they are referred to in the anthropological literature. These same pains are also the source of the shaman's **power**, so much so that the measure of a shaman's power is directly proportional to the number of pains held in the body. This notion of pains as the cause of illness and source of power extends to the west and south to the Southern Paiutes of Nevada where pains are called *pakankii*.

Pains are **energy intrusions** sent by a **spirit**, sorcerer, or someone with intent to harm the victim. They manifest in a variety of forms, frequently forms clear and sharp at both ends. They are able to fly from source to victim and continue to move even after being extracted from the body of the victim/patient.

Pains are distinguished from the energy intrusions that cause illness in other **cultures**. Pains are like simplistic **spirits**; they are in and of themselves supernaturally powerful. Other energetic intrusions are given power by the spirits or sorcerers who create them; their power is not innate. These intrusions manifest in ordinary forms, like sticks and stones whose presence in the body is harmful and disease producing.

As with energy intrusions, the shaman must locate the pain in the patient's body and suck it out, or extract it in some way. Unlike other energy intrusions the extracted pain is a potential source of power for the shaman. After a shaman has extracted a pain he or she either destroys it or keeps it within his or her own body to determine whether or not the power can be transformed to a useful power.

After the **extraction** in the **healing** ritual, the shaman usually displays the pain for the patient, family, and other participants to see, then swallows it. If it appears to the shaman that the pain will not become a source of power, it is destroyed. Once a shaman has transformed a pain to a source of power, he or she is able to vomit it up, display it, and swallow it again at will.

Traditionally, women of this region become shamans through symbolic **dreams** of pains. For example, a dream of mountain can be interpreted as a dream of the source of pains or a dream of a sunset can be interpreted as a dream of the color of pains the novice will acquire. After a novice receives her first pain in a dream, she must learn to control it so that it does not become a disease-causing agent in her body.

In this unique way, the shamans of California gain healing power through

the acquisition and control of pains. Additional pains can be acquired by dancing and fasting at isolated spots or by extracting them from patients. The most powerful shamans have collected and gained control of many, many pains. See also **California region; dance; ritual; Wintun**.

Lyon, William S. *Encyclopedia of Native American Shamanism: Sacred Ceremonies of North America*. Santa Barbara, CA: ABC-CLIO, 1998.

Paksu Mudang

The **gender-variant male** shaman who performs as a woman and dresses in women's garments while conducting **exorcism** rituals. The *paksu mudang* is one of two classes of male **shamans** in **Korea** where the *mudang* (shamans) are predominantly female. The other class is populated by traditionally masculine men who are visually impaired. Male shamans specialize in exorcisms and work with the forceful chanting of **mantras**. They rarely use **trance**, which is the **domain** of the *mudang*. See also **chant; gender variant; ritual**.

Conner, Randy P. *Blossom of Bone: Reclaiming the Connections Between Homoeroticism and the Sacred*. San Francisco: HarperCollins, 1993.

Paq'o

The *paq'o* are the **shamans** and spiritual leaders of the **Q'ero** who live high in the Andes of Peru. They serve an area or region. There are many levels of *paq'o* involving many, many years of **training**. One of the higher levels, the *pampa mesayoc*, is the "shaman" as defined in this volume. See also **Andes, South America**.

Paraphernalia

Paraphernalia refers to the personal belongings and articles of equipment used by **shamans** in their work. The paraphernalia used by a particular

shaman varies relative to **culture**, **helping spirits**, expertise or rank, and personal preference.

Examples of common paraphernalia include clothing, headdresses, stones, knives, **swords**, **divination** tools, **crystals**, whistles, **soul catchers**, musical instruments for inducing **trance**, **mirrors**, alcohol, candles, **incense**, pipes, **amulets**, spring **water**, grain, fruit, flowers, equipment for delivering prepared **plant hallucinogens**, and a vast variety of personal **power objects**.

Some items have both a universal function and unique cultural function. For example, the **drum** is used by shamans around the world as a tool to enter trance. However, some shamans decorate their drums with their map of the invisible world or use the drum directly as a divination tool.

Many objects in a shaman's collection are functional and essential to the success of the **ritual** work, like the drum, **rattle**, or smoke. The function of the item in the **healing** ritual determines whether it is essential and when. For example, alcohol offered as a **libation** in a Haitian ritual may or may not be deemed essential to that ritual, while **trago** (cane alcohol) used in a Quechua **cleansing** is essential for that healing.

Some paraphernalia is determined strictly by an individual shaman's unique **powers** and the need to embody and support it. A shaman may be guided by his or her helping spirit to find an object in a particular place or to make it in a particular way. Shamans will use a traditional object, like a sword, or an ordinary object, like a stone, in an innovative way if directed to do so by helping **spirits**.

In any shaman's collection of paraphernalia there may be items whose presence is determined by the culture. The presence of these ceremonial objects or **costumes** puts the audience and patient at ease. These things help the shaman to engage the audience and draw them into the **sacred space** of the ritual; however, the shaman could work successfully without them.

Some paraphernalia is used by shamans to provide symbolic representations of the formless and ineffable nature of the **sacred** in the material world. It is the shaman's role to communicate the sacred; however, that is not always most effective when done directly. Nor is it always possible in the midst of a healing ritual to speak. Shamans can achieve nonverbal communication during their rituals through the use of their paraphernalia. See also **embodiment** and **Quechua**.

Heinze, R. I. *Shamans of the 20th Century*. New York: Irvington Publishers, Inc., 1991.

Pattern Recognition

In the shaman's world all things have **spirit** and everything is one. A person, a stone, and a thought are all made of the same stuff. They are all **energy** and they are all connected. These connections create patterns of energy that are recognizable in **altered states of consciousness**. The **shaman** works with these patterns or forms of energy in **trance**. For example, a spirit who helps the shaman is one pattern of energy; the cause of an **illness** is another; and the shaman is another.

Everything is seen as a necessary part of the whole. However, it is the shaman's job to distinguish between the enemy and the ally, between benevolent and malevolent **spirits** and energies. The shaman's work is often interpreted through a system of good and evil, but in a more accurate and practical sense the shaman is using a system of pattern recognition.

The energetic pattern of an ally is different than that of an enemy; benevolent energy feels different than malevolent energy. In this way the shaman can distinguish, for example, the difference between a wise **ancestor** who has crossed over at death and returned to aid the shaman and the spirit of an ancestor who is unresolved about his or her life or death and hangs around the

living trying to gain resolution or revenge, which creates problems for the living.

The shaman's ability to distinguish between an enemy and an ally in the spirit world does not lie in knowing who's good and who's evil, but in pattern recognition and the ability to accurately sense energy forms. Often the shaman must "sense" through layers of deception and trickery to accurately define the true nature of a pattern or energy form.

Vitebsky, Piers. *The Shaman*. London: Little, Brown and Company, 1995.

Wilber, K. *A Brief History of Everything*. Boston: Shambhala Publications, Inc., 2001.

Pawágan

The *pawágan*, *pawáganak* (pl), is a guardian **spirit** who comes in a power **dream** or during a childhood **vision quest** to the **Ojibwa**. *Pawágan*, which means "dream visitor," refers to both the spirit and the spirit **powers** obtained from the spirit through the vision quest or power dreams. These **spirits** usually appear in a human form and are referred to as "grandfather."

All Ojibwa children are encouraged to seek *pawágan* through power dreams from the age of six until the spirit powers come. It is especially important for boys to gain the protection of a *pawágan* given the dangers inherent in hunting and warfare. Between the ages of ten and fourteen years, any boy who had not acquired his *pawágan* spontaneously was sent on a vision quest each spring until the **helping spirit** was acquired.

A site was selected in the woods and a platform, or *wázisan* ("nest"), was constructed there in a tree for each boy. The boy remained in the *wázisan*, often for more than week, until his *pawágan* presented itself in a power dream or **vision**. The content of these power dreams was not shared with anyone or the power acquired would be withdrawn from the boy. Even so, all powers

received in this way from the *pawágan* were contingent upon the fulfillment of obligations and the adherence to **taboos** defined by the *pawágan*. See also *manitou*.

Lyon, William S. *Encyclopedia of Native American Shamanism: Sacred Ceremonies of North America*. Santa Barbara, CA: ABC-CLIO, 1998.

Paxé

In ancient times the peoples of the southwestern **North America** prepared a **plant hallucinogen** called *paxé*. *Paxé* was made by mixing **peyote** (*Lophophora williamsii*) with herbs and **samin** (little red beans, *Sophora secundiflora*).

Payé

Payé means imbued with shamanic **power**. Things and animals are referred to as being *payé* or a little *payé*. *Payé* is a title given to shamans throughout much of **Amazonia**; however, *payé* does not always equal shaman in use.

The *payé* usually works with sacred **plant hallucinogens** to learn directly from the **spirits** of the plants how to use the vast variety of rain forest plants for entheogenic and medicinal purposes. The *payé's* role in the community is based on the power and accuracy of his or her work in **trance** with the spirits and energies of the invisible world. See also **ayahuascero**; **entheogen**; **plant diets**.

Schultes, R. E., and R. F. Raffauf. *Vine of the Soul: Medicine Men, Their Plants and Rituals in the Colombian Amazonia*. Santa Fe, NM: Synergetic Press, 2004.

Peak Experiences

Peak experiences are intense, climactic human responses to the experience of one's connection to all things. They are poignantly emotional and at times exclusively emotional. They are characterized by an element of surprise or

disbelief and a quality of a *first time* experience or a miracle.

Peak experiences are often transcendent, mystical, or religious experiences that are not dependent on location (church or temple) or beliefs (**religion** or faith), nor do they necessarily imply supernatural intervention. Peak experiences arise from a particularly lucid state of mind that is achievable in almost any activity, when the activity is raised to the individual's threshold level of perfection.

The terms "religious" or "mystical" do not describe the full range of peak experiences. The same quality of peak experience can be triggered by stimuli or situations other than those in religious or mystical contexts. For example, experiences of nature, of the creative, of love, of sex, of death or despair, of insight, of performing live, or of watching a live performance of **art** or athletics can trigger a peak experience.

Peak experiences are hard to share with others who have not experienced the ecstatic state of a peak experience. People turn to shamans, in part, to have their peak experience resolved into a greater cosmic framework so that they can understand and use it. Others who have not had peak experiences turn to **shamans** to connect with the **sacred** through the shaman's ecstatic state, experiencing a peak vicariously.

Peak experiences come unexpectedly and do not necessarily contribute to the progress of all those who seek transcendent states of consciousness. Peak experiences are best understood as a tool for personal development, not a way of life. Applying what is gleaned in a peak experience to one's life can lead to a more sustained transcendent experience. The compulsive pursuit of the peak experiences alone may result in neglecting the very paths that will ultimately lead the individual to a more sustained transcendent experience of life.

At the turn of the century, peak experiences were considered abnormal or pathological by Western psychologists.

While it is true that the mentally ill may have peak experiences, peak experiences themselves are not proof of mental **illness**. Peak experiences are more a characteristic of healthy individuals than of neurosis or psychosis.

It is becoming increasingly apparent that not having peak experiences is actually a sign of illness. A life without peak experiences may indicate a state in which the individual is not functioning as a full human or not sufficiently integrated. Not asking the questions that lead to peak experiences may be a sign of abnormal existential health. A healthy individual who adequately fulfills the concept of being human should experience spontaneous, peak moments in life.

The content of the peak experience and the experience itself reveal the nature of reality, humankind's relation to it, and the values inherent in it. Peak experiences transcend morals, **ethics**, and dualities, like the distinction between good and evil. They reveal how these parts of life that appeared at odds in the moments before the experience now fit together into the whole.

The characteristics of a peak experience are known completely, without linear thought, throughout the entire being. In short, they are grokked. The following is a list of twenty-five characteristics of peak experiences:

1. The entire universe is perceived of as an integrated and unified whole in which the individual recognizes his or her place.
2. The quality and quantity of concentration is greater and more focused, resulting in enhanced perception of total sight, **sound**, and feeling. The inherent equality in things emerges from this totality, replacing the human habit of arranging things in a hierarchy of importance.
3. In this state of heightened awareness of one's own being, the being aspect of the external world and external objects becomes apparent. Everything exists as an end in itself, not as a value defined relative to humans.

4. The independent reality of objects and people is more readily apparent as the individual's perception becomes less egocentric.
 5. The peak experience is self-validating and self-justifying. Its intrinsic value may be experienced so intensely and completely that it renews the intrinsic value of life and justifies living.
 6. Peak experiences are recognized as an end, not a means. This affirms that there are things, objects, or experiences that are worthwhile in themselves, thus renewing the awareness that life is worthwhile.
 7. Awareness of **time** and **space** is altered. There may be a perception of timelessness and/or spacelessness, a complete lack of consciousness of time and space, or an awareness of eternity and universality.
 8. The world is seen as a whole. Evil, pain, **disease**, and death are accepted, understood, and seen in their proper places in the whole, as unavoidable, necessary, and belonging.
 9. Through this profound acceptance of the whole, the individual is freed from the need to judge, blame, condemn, or be disappointed, and can respond with pity, charity, kindness, and perhaps sadness or amusement.
 10. The spiritual values of which the world is made become apparent. For example, the world does not merely exist; it is also sacred. Reality, then, is perceived as being composed of intrinsic values, which are absolute and can be defined in terms of each other but cannot be analyzed or broken down further.
 11. The awareness of one's place in the greater being of the whole inspires a more passive, receptive, and humble consciousness than is normal for the individual.
 12. The peak experience inspires in the individual feelings of wonder, awe, reverence, **humility**, surrender, and worship.
 13. The individual perceives of unity and integration in the world and tends to move toward fusion, integration, and unity within himself, resolving or transcending the dichotomies, polarities, and conflicts of life.
 14. The individual experiences a transient loss of fear, anxiety, inhibition, defense and control, perplexity, confusion, conflict, delay, and restraint.
 15. The immediate effects or after-effects on the individual can range in intensity from life changing to therapeutic to no effects at all.
 16. The individual experiences an increased awareness of "heaven" as an ever-available state that exists all the time all around.
 17. The individual experiences a tendency to move toward uniqueness, the real self, or to become more real.
 18. The individual experiences increased awareness of "free will," of being the responsible, active, and creative center of his or her own activities.
 19. Peak experiences allow those who have clear and strong identities to transcend the ego and enter a selfless state of consciousness.
 20. The individual becomes more loving and accepting, and, as a result, more spontaneous, honest, and innocent.
 21. The individual transcends the experience of living under the laws of the physical world and becomes aware of the influence of psychological laws.
 22. The wholeness of the peak experience frees the individual from striving, needing, or wishing for more.
 23. During and after the peak experience, the individual feels lucky, fortunate, and graced to have had the experience.
 24. The dichotomy between humility and pride tends to be resolved in the peak experience.
 25. The individual experiences "unitive consciousness" and the sacred essence of all worldly experiences and things.
- See also **ecstasy**; **mystical experiences**; **plateau experiences**; **trance**.

Cleary, T. S., and S. I. Shapiro. "The Plateau Experience and the Post-mortem Life: Abraham H. Maslow's Unfinished Theory." *Journal for Transpersonal Psychology* 27, no. 1 (1995): 1–23.

Maslow, Abraham H. *Religions, Values, and Peak-Experiences*. New York: Penguin, 1994.

Persecution of Shamans

There is a long history, worldwide, of the death and persecution of shamans by invading **religions** and governments. **Shamanism** has survived through adaptation in some areas and retreats onto wholly undesirable land in other areas, yet some scholars ask why isn't there more shamanism today?

Michael Harner, anthropologist and founder/president of the **Foundation for Shamanic Studies**, explains that the persecution of shamans and the suppression of shamanic practices were quite strong. Even in the nineteenth century, it was still a criminal offense to own a **drum** in parts of Europe. Human history shows us again and again that the threat of death, banishment from one's community, and systematic persecution are often enough to wipe out entire **cultures** or, at the very least, to send practices for cultivating **power** and individual freedom deeply underground. Either way, it is only a matter of a single lifetime, that of the few living traditional **shamans**, before the practices are lost.

The systematic persecution of shamans was enforced through laws, banning shamanic practices like drumming, and death. These things are a matter of record. What must also be noted is the extent to which the conquering governments and religions successfully undermined respect for the shamans and the shamans' worldview.

Even before the systematic persecution, anyone who was called by **spirit** to become a shaman was deeply reluctant to follow that path. The life of the shaman involves far too much sacrifice

in the best of situations for an individual to follow that path when the respect and social support for the role are also removed. There is little reason for the next generation to respond to a call that brings disrespect, disregard, social ostracism, possible imprisonment, and a very real threat of death.

Nonetheless, shamans have absorbed, assimilated, and reinterpreted new belief systems again and again all over the globe. They have adapted primarily to be tolerated by the locally dominant government and/or religion. Adaptation often meant barely saving their wisdom, their teachings, and their lives.

Adaptation has allowed **contemporary shamans** to remain effective as healers even after their cultures have changed. Shamans adapt to gain the trust of new clients where the old ways have been discredited and dismissed as superstition. For example, many shamans in **Tuva** are also Buddhist **priests**. Shamans have also adapted to understand the **psyches** of clients, changed through the client's adaptation. Many shamans adapted by blending religion into their practices because missionaries came with religious beliefs they professed were "right." Entire cultures were swayed by the new and powerfully compelling concept of "right." It was not initially apparent that accepting the "rightness" of these religious beliefs necessarily defined their spirituality as wrong.

As societies and shamans evolved and adapted over time, a variety of specialists appeared to try to fill the holes created in the social fabric by the suppression of shamanism. Many of the shaman's traditional roles were picked up by healers, priests, mediums, and sorcerers specializing, respectively, in medicine, **ceremony**, spirit **possession**, and malevolent magic. Most of the shamans' roles and skills were retained by these specialists except one, journeying. None of the shamans' successors **journey**. Without the journey, the art of shamanism and the ability to create vital **healing** ritual is lost. See also **ritual**.

- Harner, Michael J. *The Way of the Shaman*. San Francisco: Harper-Collins, 1990.
- Heinze, R. I. *Shamans of the 20th Century*. New York: Irvington Publishers, Inc., 1991.
- Walsh, R. "What Is a Shaman? Definition, Origin, and Distribution." *Journal of Transpersonal Psychology* 21, no. 1 (1989): 1–11.

Peyote

Lophophora cactus is found in two distinct species, *williamsii* and *diffusa*, and both are used as peyote by the indigenous peoples from the southwest coast of **North America** to the Sierra Madre and from Mexico north to what is now Arkansas. The **Huichol** of Mexico say that eating peyote "will give one heart" and greatly increase the *kupuri*, or life-force **energy**. They revere peyote above **Teonanácatl**, **Morning Glory**, **Datura**, and all other **plant hallucinogens** of that region and have built the social and mythological structure of their **culture** around peyote and the experience of the **trance** state it induces.

Lophophora cacti are small, spineless, top-shaped plants measuring up to three-and-a-quarter inches in diameter. *Lophophora* is found in scattered locations of dry, calcareous soil in the stony desert regions of Mexico and Texas. Each section of the cactus grows a flat areole with a tuft of hairs. Whitish or pinkish flowers, called *tútu* by the Huichol, grow from the center of the crown, the part of the plant that is harvested for use. *Lophophora williamsii* is usually blue-green with five to thirteen ribs, while *Lophophora diffusa* has a gray-green to yellow-green crown with infinite ribs and curves. If harvested properly, the roots continue to reproduce.

The use of peyote, medicinally and as a sacred **entheogen**, is an ancient practice in the Americas. Archaeologists discovered peyote in Texas preserved in a way that suggests ceremonial use more than three thousand years ago in

the United States. There are reports of the use among the **Aztecs** even earlier. Peyote use is recorded with the Chichimeca, who inhabited the desert plateaus of northern Mexico, and the Toltecs at least two thousand years ago and with the Tarahumara long before that. Tarahumara symbols of peyote ceremonies are found in ancient lava rock carvings in **Mesoamerica**.

There is some scholarly discussion about who first discovered the use of peyote and how that practice then spread to others. The indigenous peoples who used peyote traditionally explain that peyote came to them from the gods in the time of creation and that the peyote spirit taught different peoples how to use it, independently of one another.

Regardless of where it came from, the medicinal and ceremonial use of peyote was firmly rooted in the spiritual practices of the native populations of Mexico and the Southwest long before the New World was "discovered" by Europeans. Religious and cultural persecution, first by the Spaniards and then by white Americans and more missionaries, drove these practices into hiding in the hills and valleys that are home to the Huichol, Tarahumara, Cora, and others where peyote use persists today.

In addition, peyote use has spread well beyond the areas of its original use due to the unifying force of the **Native American Church**. Within the practices of the Native American Church, peyote is shared as sacrament by peoples of diverse Native American nations. They gather to experience the ecstatic union with **spirit** and direct communication with the spirit that is characteristic of the peyote-induced altered state. Established in 1922 with 13,300 members, the membership of the Native American Church has grown to more than a quarter-million.

Peyote is called many names, including *hikori* by the Tarahumara, *wokowi* by the Comanches, *señi* by the Kiowas, and *peyotl* in Nahuatl, the

native **language** of the Aztecs. Though it has been called “mescal,” peyote should not be confused with **mescal beans** that are psychoactive and highly toxic or mescal liquor that is distilled from agave cactus.

Use

Peyote is used by various indigenous peoples as a means to enter trance and communicate directly with spirit. Regional and individual variations are seen in its use and the **rituals** and **dance** ceremonies that accompany its use. Healings are often performed by **shamans** in the context of these rituals and ceremonies. While in a peyote-induced trance state **shamans** can manipulate *kupuri* and the patient's relationship to the web of energy that connects all life and effect a cure.

Peyote is also used medicinally. It is prepared in a variety of ways to treat a variety of **illnesses** and physical distress. Peyote is also eaten for medicinal purposes, though usually in smaller amounts than when eaten for its entheogenic properties. In some cultures peyote is eaten outside of ritual or medicinal context, to restore energy and stay awake, to go without food or **water** for days, or to fight without fear, under the protection of the peyote spirit.

Peyote dance ceremonies serve as a form of preventative **medicine** on both the personal and the social levels. Ingesting peyote and dancing is a form of **prayer** that enables dancers to connect to each other in mystical and spiritual dimensions. When they dance, they are united with each other and with the spirit that connects all things. This is the “One Heart” that the Huichol mara'akate (shamans) speak of and it is the reason peyote is held in such high regard by the peoples who use it.

Preparation

The crown is cut from the root of the cactus so that the roots sprout new crowns. Peyote cacti with multiple heads are not uncommon. The crowns

are then eaten raw or dried. The crowns are also prepared as a tea or a mash. The dried, disk-like heads are known as Peyote Buttons or Mescal Buttons.

For the Huichol, preparation and consumption of peyote is almost always done within a strict ceremonial context. During the **peyote hunt**, peyote is not eaten until the shaman indicates that the time is right to do so even though the pilgrims have been fasting for days. The pilgrims first stalk it, hunt it like deer, and then, after all of the ritual obligations are performed, eat the fresh peyote before continuing with their annual harvest. Peyote is preferred freshly harvested, and four to thirty crowns may be consumed by a dancer in the course of a typical **ceremony**.

Active Principle

The primary active principle of *Lophophora williamsii* is mescaline, or trimethoxyphenylethylamine. It also contains as many as thirty alkaloids, mostly phenylethylamines and isoquinolines. *Lophophora diffusa* is morphologically and chemically much simpler, with mescaline still the primary active principle.

Mescaline is responsible for the spectacular, vibrantly colored **visions** induced by both species of cacti. It is nonvolatile; therefore, the peyote does not lose its potency when dried or stored. Traditionally, the peyote gathered once a year in the Huichol peyote hunt is dried and stored for use throughout the year.

Characteristics of the Induced Altered State

Peyote induces a trance state characterized by spectacular visions with kaleidoscopic **colors**, **sounds**, feelings, and flavors. These strong hallucinogenic effects come with only mild aftereffects relative to other plant hallucinogens. The first phase of the trance state is characterized by feelings of contentment and the increased sensitivity of all the senses. The onset of the second phase is marked by a great calm,

muscular sluggishness, a shift of focus to introspection and meditation, and for some interaction with figures, scenes, or animated objects.

Peyote visions differ depending on the amount of peyote eaten and the level of spiritual awareness of the individual. The second phase of **phosphene** perception is believed to be the direct communication with the spirit world, and not everyone who consumes peyote can make the transition into the second phase. This transition is often described as a passage through darkness, a tunnel, or a doorway that must be navigated by the individual, not experienced passively.

Ritual of Receiving Peyote

For the Huichol, the first ritual of receiving the **sacred** cacti is performed at the harvest during the peyote hunt. The lead **mará'akame** blesses the ritual objects with sacred water, the candles and copal **incense** are lit, and everyone prays to the five directions. Fresh peyote is placed in votive bowls. With **feather** wand and sacred water the **mará'akame** purifies everyone, touching peyote to their cheeks, throat, and wrists. Then the pilgrims remove the white tufts, leave them as **offerings**, peel the tough skin, and eat from the first peyote of the hunt.

In the villages, the traditional peyote ritual is primarily a dance ritual that appears to have changed little over the centuries. Although the importance of peyote as an entheogen varies among the peoples who use it, the dancing does not vary in importance to the traditional ritual. The Cora, for example, begin by clearing and sweeping a space large enough for all the men and women who will dance. The "leader of the **singing**" is seated in the center with the lead musician and each of their assistants.

Peyote is consumed by all who participate. A tray of peyote and a peyote drink are prepared for the dancers. The dancers dance around the **circle** or in place marking time with their feet. The

musician and singer continue with the dancers throughout the evening without exhaustion. No one stops or leaves the circle from early evening until well after dawn. Some ceremonies last two to four days.

The Tarahumara name for their peyote dance ritual means "moving about the fire." The peyote, the fire, the dancing, and the dancers' prayers are the most important elements of the ritual. The Tarahumara hold the dance at any time of the year, often incorporating it with other festivals, yet always dancing for health, tribal prosperity, or simple worship. **Healing** rituals are often carried out within the dance. The full night of dancing with peyote is followed by a day of feasting.

Songs and Dances

The dances are the physical **embodiment** of the dancers' prayers and their experiences in the spirit world during their peyote-induced trance. The **songs** are all given to people by the peyote spirit. To receive a song is considered good luck. The songs are the **words** of peyote and are shared with the whole community. All of the songs sung throughout the night praise peyote for its protection of the tribe and the beauty and unity it brings to the people.

Use in Western Medicine

Mescaline is used in contemporary psychiatry. It is similar in structure to norepinephrine (norepinephrine), a brain hormone. The chemistry of mescaline is relatively simple, 3, 4, 5, trimethoxyphenylethylamine, and is easily synthesized. See also **altered states of consciousness**.

Conner, Randy P. *Blossom of Bone: Reclaiming the Connections Between Homoeroticism and the Sacred*. San Francisco: HarperCollins, 1993.

Schaefer, S. B., and P. T. Furst, eds. *People of the Peyote: Huichol Indian History, Religion and Survival*. Albuquerque, NM: University of New Mexico Press, 1998.

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Peyote Hunt

The annual gathering of **peyote** by the **Huichol**. Once a year small groups of ten to fifteen pilgrims are led by an experienced **mará'akame** (**shaman**) on a **journey** that repeats the same journey taken by their **ancestor**, *Tatewarí*, who led the original peyote hunt. Through the peyote hunt the Huichol participate in a **sacred** pilgrimage to the home of their Ancestors in **Wirikuta**, the origin of the sacred life of the Huichol.

The pilgrims travel as the Ancient Ones did, abstaining from sex, sleep, and eating only peyote and tortillas. Those who make this arduous journey travel for several days over two hundred miles. They journey "to find their life" at *Wirikuta* where all are one. The pilgrimage is often made by novice shamans seeking sacred visions and special shamanic **powers**. However, many pilgrims are family members, often traveling with children, so that they are taught through experience family and cultural values.

Preparation

The pilgrims prepare for the journey through a **ritual** of recapitulation and **purification** with *Tatewarí*, the spirit of fire. Each participant, including the *mará'akame* who will lead the hunt, publicly recapitulates all of the sexual encounters of his or her entire life, without resentment or jealousy. This ritual does not involve shows of guilt, shame, or blame. Even people who are not making the pilgrimage participate in this ritual of **cleansing** and renewal.

The *mará'akame* knots a string for each encounter. This string with the knots of the entire group is burned at the close of the ritual. With the burning, each participant is cleansed by *Tatewarí*

and returned to his or her state of pre-sexual innocence. The preparation ritual ensures the safety of the group on their dangerous passage.

Negative experiences during the peyote-induced **trance** state are rare. However, the most common reason for having an unpleasant experience is not naming all of the people with whom one has had sexual relations during the preparation ritual. To recapitulate incompletely is in essence a lie to the community; however, to do so in ritual is to lie to a god.

Ingesting peyote opens a channel of communication to the gods, who if lied to will have something to say about it, which results in an unpleasant hallucinogenic experience. Thus, peyote reinforces the importance of proper participation in rituals, traditions, and in one's interactions with others.

Gathering Peyote

Tatewarí, the first *mará'akame*, led the first expedition to collect peyote at *Wirikuta* where the hallucinogenic cactus grows abundantly. Each pilgrim carries a basket filled with **offerings** of peyote to the Ancestor gods and goddesses at *Wirikuta*. The same basket will be used to transport the fresh peyote back home. Pilgrims also carry a **tobacco** gourd, gourds for carrying sacred **water** from *Wirikuta*, dried peyote, and the tortillas they will eat on their journey.

Today, much of the two-hundred-mile trek is done by whatever transportation can be arranged. Little else has changed. The pilgrims still travel, abstaining from water, sex, sleep, and food, other than the tortillas, throughout the journey.

When the pilgrims are in sight of the sacred mountains of *Wirikuta* (near San Luís Potosí), the hunt begins to take on otherworldly dimensions. The *mará'akame* begins to **chant** and pray. The pilgrims ritually wash and pray for rain and fertility. As the chanting continues the pilgrims begin to enter lightly into **altered states of consciousness** and the Ancient times become superimposed on present time.

As the journey continues the *mara'akame* opens the portals into the spirit world, first the Gateway of the Clashing Clouds and then the Gateway of the Clouds. This passage, though only literally several feet, is often filled with emotion for the pilgrims who are now returning, physically and spiritually, to the place of the origin of their ancestors.

When the pilgrims arrive at the place of the peyote, the *mara'akame* begins the ceremonial preparation for the hunt. The *mara'akame* tells stories of the peyote tradition and invokes protection for the hunt. Everyone lights candles and prays, while the *mara'akame* chants, filling everyone with the power of the spirits of the Ancestors. New pilgrims are blindfolded, and all are led through the threshold and into the hunt.

When the *mara'akame* has seen "the deer tracks" (the first peyote cactus), he draws his bow and arrow and shoots the cactus. The peyote is found. The pilgrims raise candles in the direction of the ascending **sun** and make their offerings to the spirits and to *Hikuri*, the peyote. The *mara'akame* continues his chants and the pilgrims pray and cry out to the gods to accept their offerings.

The first peyote found is shared by all, then everyone begins collecting until the baskets are full. The cactus is always cut away from its roots so that it will grow again "from its bones." The gathering may continue into the next day. When the baskets are full the hunt is closed as are all portals opened to get to *Wirikuta* in a ritual fire.

When the pilgrims return home each family member in the rancho is blessed with sacred water and give peyote chosen especially for them so that they may also share in the visions and experiences of the pilgrims who undertook the sacred journey for all.

Myerhoff, B. G. *Peyote Hunt: The Sacred Journey of the Huichol Indians*. Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1974.

Schultes, Richard Evans, Albert Hofmann, and Christian Rätsch. *Plants of the Gods: Their Sacred, Healing, and Hallucinogenic Powers*. Rochester, VT: Healing Arts Press, 2001.

Peyotéro

A pilgrim who participates in the traditional **Huichol** peyote hunt. See also **peyote** and **peyote hunt**.

Phlegm

In many South American **cultures** the shaman's magical **power** is accumulated in an abstract, invisible substance contained in phlegm. Among various peoples of the upper Amazon, for example, one aspect of the shaman's power is stored as *yachay*, a thick white phlegm in the upper part of the stomach. The **shaman** accesses the powers stored in the phlegm by regurgitating it.

This regurgitated phlegm contains magical objects (arrows, thorns, rock **crystals**, shells, insects, etc.), spirit helpers, which aid the shaman in **healing**, and **tsentsak** (magical darts). Once in the mouth of the shaman the *tsentsak* can be blown into people either to aid in extracting **illness** or to lodge itself and generate illness. Regurgitating *yachay* for the **apprentice** to drink is the primary means by which the shaman passes **knowledge** and power on to an apprentice.

The word *yachay*, is derived from a verb meaning "to know." Shamanic power arises in part from knowing how the world really is and in part from the ability to manipulate these processes. *Yachay* embodies both the power and knowledge necessary to perform shamanic acts of healing and magic.

The Shipibo-Conibo of eastern Peru explain that *qhenyon* (phlegm) embodies knowledge the shaman gains through **visions** and **training** over his lifetime. In training the *quenyon* is sucked from the mouth of the shaman by the apprentice who must then

accumulate and store the substance in his body. The *quenyon* becomes the new shaman's power that he will add to over his lifetime. See also **embodiment**; **extraction**; **South America**.

Langdon, E. Jean, and G. Bear. *Portals of Power: Shamanism in South America*. Albuquerque, NM: University of New Mexico Press, 1992.

Vitebsky, Piers. *The Shaman*. London: Little, Brown and Company, 1995.

Phosphenes

Phosphenes are luminous lines, zigzags, grids, vortices, flashes, nested curved lines, and spots of lights that characterize the **visions** in the early stage of **trance**. They can be seen with the eyes open or shut. The visual phenomena of the journeying trance states change as the journeyer progresses more deeply into trance. Phosphenes are characteristic of the first stage of the three distinct stages of trance. See also **journey**.

Pindé

See *ayahuasca*.

Pisautut

Pisautut is the West Greenland **Eskimo** term for life force, or *mana*, that manifests from the *inua* or **soul**. In a **soul retrieval** healing, the *angakok* (shaman) restores the patient's *pisautut* by retrieving the lost *inua* from the spirit world and returning it to the patient's body. See also **Greenland**; **healing**; **soul loss**.

Lyon, William S. *Encyclopedia of Native American Shamanism: Sacred Ceremonies of North America*. Santa Barbara, CA: ABC-CLIO, 1998.

Placings (for spirits)

Objects used to house spirit **power**. Placings can be permanent or temporary. Permanent placings are used for **spirits** that could be passed on, like clan

spirits, or for spirits an individual hopes to have a permanent relationship with, like master spirits, without whose help the **shaman** would die of lack of power and protection while performing shamanic **rituals**.

The placings are present when a shaman performs rituals as they are a source of power. They can be created, like a carved tiger or bear, or used as found. Placings are **power objects** when they are in use housing a spirit.

Shirokogorov, S. M. *Psychomental Complex of the Tungus*. Brooklyn, NY: AMS Press, Inc., 1980.

Plant Diets

Observing a strict plant diet is a fundamental part of the traditional process of working with plant **teachers** in the Amazon regions. The **diets** are prescribed through **visions** given to the **shaman** by the **spirit** of the plant while the shaman is in a **trance** state induced by a **plant hallucinogen**.

A shaman observes a very restricted diet specific to the plant, for example, rice, plantains, and **water**, for the designated time to learn to work with a particular plant. During the plant diet period the only other thing the shaman consumes is the plant itself, to experience its effects on the body, and *ayahuasca*, to aid the shaman in attuning with the spirit of the plant.

Some plants need only one dieting period to convey the **knowledge** and information necessary for their safe use and preparation for a variety of medicinal applications. Other plants or plant preparations, like *ayahuasca*, have so much to teach and so much knowledge to convey that their diets may be repeated many times. Even experienced shamans will undergo a plant diet when they want to learn to use a new plant.

Each plant has its own diet, with specific foods, thoughts, and activities required for a specific number of days. Some diets extend into months and many require seclusion from family,

social activities, and sex. For some plants there are different diets for learning different ways of preparing and applying the same plant.

During the diet, the student is taught how, when, and where to harvest the plant: what parts of the plant to use; and how different parts of the plant can be used to treat different problems. The shaman also learns how to prepare the plants, which sometimes involves numerous steps, and how different preparations can be used to treat different problems.

Dieting is supervised by a shaman who can intervene when necessary to restore harmony between the student and the energies of the plant teacher. The diet is designed by the **plant spirit** to release old emotional patterning and fears that block the student's ability to communicate with the plant teacher. When these energies are released they can clash with the plant energies in ways that result in physical or emotional trauma. The shaman can intervene to restore balance and communication between the energies.

Once a diet is begun, it must not be broken in thought or action. To break a commitment with a plant teacher is like conducting a **ritual** without closing it. The spirits always do something to remind the people that they are still there. Plant spirits may cause accidents and bad fortune in the life of a student who breaks his or her commitment. Only a shaman who is on intimate terms with the plant spirit who has been betrayed can heal the relationship between the person and the plant.

Plant Hallucinogens

Hallucinogenic plants have been used by people around the world for tens of thousands of years. They are a diverse group of plants that are in general toxic, narcotic, and nonaddictive. Approximately 150 species of plants are known to be used for their hallucinogenic properties and at least one is found in almost every area of the globe.

There are very few **First Peoples** who did not use hallucinogenic plants. **Australia**, New Zealand, and the Pacific Islands are the only areas where hallucinogenic plants are found in the local flora, but there is no known usage of them as hallucinogens by the **aboriginal** populations. The Polynesians did use *Piper mythesticum* to make the hypnotic drink *Kava-kava*. However it is not a true hallucinogen. There is also no known usage of hallucinogens with the **Eskimos** who have strong shamanic traditions, but very little plant life of any kind.

Plant hallucinogens work because they are "toxic." A toxic substance is broadly defined as a plant, animal, or chemical substance ingested for other than purely nutritional purposes that has a noticeable biodynamic effect on the body. Relative to **shamanism**, intoxication must be understood as a broad range of biodynamic effects, including sensory stimulation, shift in sense of self, and awareness of one's place in the **Kosmos**.

Plant hallucinogens are also used medicinally and in medicinal preparations with other plants. The difference between a **medicine**, a hallucinogen, and a poison is often the dosage, and in many cases the preparation. **Shamans** clearly understand that a proper dosage and specific application or preparation of a **plant medicine** is medicinal, while a stronger dosage and preparation is narcotic, while an even stronger dosage can be deadly.

Hallucinogens are nonaddictive and narcotic, which means technically (not legally) that the substance terminates its effects by depressing the central nervous system after one or more phases of stimulation. Many kinds of hallucinations are experienced during the phases of stimulation including: visual, auditory, tactile, olfactory, gustatory, and biomechanical. A single plant hallucinogen may induce several kinds of hallucinations simultaneously or in different phases.

Some plants induce experiences of such psychophysiological complexity

that they can not be accurately classified as hallucinations, which are generally visual and auditory. These plants are the **entheogens**, a term created because no other single term addresses the full range of sensory experience or the spiritual and magical aspects of the effects induced by these plants. The trance **experiences** induced by entheogens can be indistinguishable from traditional, mystical religious experiences.

Some plant hallucinogens can induce what contemporary medicine would consider psychotic states, or artificial psychoses. In this case the active agent can be called psychotomimetic. *Psychotomimetic* effects are normally temporary, though occasionally permanent effects are reported due to misuse, overuse, or overdose.

Our intention is to present the plant hallucinogens from the perspective of the people who have been using them for thousands of years and not to limit this discussion to the point of view of people who have only been studying them for a few short decades. From the shaman's experience and perspective the plant hallucinogens alter an individual's relationship with **space, time, self, and the Universe**. There is no loss of consciousness. However, there is a change in which an individual's perception of reality and consciousness itself can be deeply altered by these **sacred** plants.

This shift in consciousness allows the shaman, and the patient when he or she also ingests the hallucinogen, to enter into the realm where the true **spirit** nature of the **illness** or **disease** resides. In the shaman's world sickness and death originate in the spirit world, not from some removed physical or organic cause. The illness can be "seen" in a form that allows accurate **diagnosis**, a clear remedy or process for removal, and ultimately a **healing** resolution.

Chemical Factories and Initiation

All plants are chemical factories. The plant hallucinogens produce specific

and complex chemical substances that promote healing and expand human consciousness. Plants that create hallucinogenic substances occur in the angiosperms, the highest evolved flowering plants, and in one division of fungi, which are simpler plants. The active chemistry of various plant hallucinogens is listed in the body of the individual entries.

The activity of hallucinogenic plants is induced by a limited number of chemical substances that act on the central nervous system in specific ways. The effects are temporary, lasting until the body can metabolize or excrete the active substance. These chemical substances are closely related in chemical structure to hormones present in the brain, like serotonin and noradrenaline, that play essential roles in the biochemistry of the brain's activities.

The science of how these related chemical substances function in the brain, particularly the powerful entheogens, is not completely understood. It has been proposed that these hallucinogens, having the same basic structure as normal brain hormones, may act at the same site in the nervous system as the hormones do. This is based on the assumption that similar "keys" fit the same "lock." If so, the psychophysiological functions associated with those brain sites would be altered, suppressed, stimulated, or otherwise modified.

While exactly how the entheogens work may remain part of the **Great Mystery**, shamans continue to use how they work for essential steps in **training** and **initiation**. In some **cultures** hallucinogens are used in training as an intermediate step in opening the initiate's awareness of and connection to the spirit world. Many diverse shamanic peoples speak of opening a hole in the head to allow spirit to come in.

After years of training and experience in various trance states, some shamans develop the ability to access the desired altered state through will and intention alone. Many master

shamans choose when to use the plant hallucinogens and which plant to use. In some cultures one plant hallucinogen is used regularly in shamanic **rituals** while other hallucinogens are used only as needed for severe situations. In other cultures hallucinogens are rarely, if ever, used.

Consciousness Altering Is Not Consciousness Expanding

In this era of pharmacological psychology it is important to understand the difference between psychoactive drugs, like antidepressants, stimulants, and other mood-altering drugs, and the psychoactive **plant medicines** used in traditional shamanic practices. Psychoactive drugs are *consciousness-altering*; they switch awareness from one point of focus to another. The individual's consciousness is switched by the drug from a pattern that is painful, like depression, to another pattern that feels significantly less painful or more empowered.

Hallucinogenic substances, like the plant medicines, function differently. They are *consciousness-expanding*; they widen the perceptual focus and bring the attention into the moment. They do not switch between patterns running in the same state of consciousness. They induce an **alternate state of consciousness**. They expand consciousness to include awareness of the painful pattern, a perception that it is only a pattern, the other patterns running simultaneously, an awareness of a larger context into which these patterns all fit, and the expanded point of view that there is an even larger pattern moving within the self, and another pattern in the space around the self into which all patterns weave together with everything.

In a state of expanded consciousness the individual's pain is still present; however, it is perceived differently. It now holds less value relative to the expanded point of view. The pain is seen in the context of a greater Whole and recognized as part of that Whole. Every experience then, of pain or pleasure, is

only one experience in a vastly expanded spectrum of sensations and experiences. See also **altered states of consciousness**; *amanita muscaria*; *ayahuasca*; *Brugmansia aurea*; *Brunfelsia*; *Datura*; **Deadly Nightshade**; *epená*; *Iboga*; *Ololiuqui*; **peyote**; **plant spirits**; **San Pedro**; *Teonanácatl*; *yopo*.

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Plant Medicines

There are two general classes of plant medicines; those that are regarded as **sacred** and those known and used by the general population. The sacred plant medicines are primarily the hallucinogens with some medicinals and are used exclusively by or under the strict guidance of the **shaman**. The general plant medicines are primarily medicinals with some mild preparations of hallucinogens and are used by anyone with **knowledge** of plant remedies.

In many **cultures** the herbal or plant doctor is a different profession than the shaman, though in these cultures the two types of healers usually work together. Whether a shaman or plant doctor, these indigenous healers may know and employ over a hundred species of medicinal plants. Each of

these species may be used in many different ways to treat a variety of illnesses.

Indigenous peoples have always considered the plants sacred, particularly those that alter the normal functions of the mind and the body. In the native pharmacopoeia there are many plants that aid the physical **healing** of the body. However the **entheogens**, which help to heal the **soul** as well, are considered doctors in their own right.

In the shaman's worldview, sickness and death originate in the spirit world. Plants that allow the shaman to contact the spirit world are then the basis for his or her healing practice. Because the plant entheogens enable humans to speak to the **spirits**, they are called the "plants of the gods" or the "flesh of the gods."

The chemistry and bioactivity of the plant medicines are not the primary source of their **power** to heal. The primary power comes from the creative union of the plant's spirit and the shaman's spirit. The **words** and **songs** the shaman **sings** while preparing and ingesting or working with the spirit of the plant in the **medicine** are essential to the remedy. Without **singing** to the plant, the shaman knows the remedies would be weak. The words carried by the breath of the shaman are believed to have their own creative power.

The shaman's spiritual beliefs, or worldview, are the basis for that creative union with the **plant spirits**. The way the shaman works in union with medicinal and hallucinogenic plants is a direct application of his or her spiritual beliefs in the physical world.

The shaman can use either the physical attributes or the spiritual attributes (or both) of any plant. For example, in **Amazonia**, *kana*, the reddish berries of *Sabicea amazonensis* (Rubiaceae), is an important additive to sweeten the bitter **ayahuasca** drink. This uses the plant's physicality.

Kana is also the center of **initiation** rituals that use the plant's spirit. *Kana* berries are used in initiation because the shaman believes that each fruit is a

heart and that these hearts are strung together like the fruits of the *kana* vine. These hearts are the people of each generation connected by the vine. By eating the *kana* fruit one is connected to the ancestral source of life. In these **rituals** the shaman **camays** (blows the Oneness of All Things) into the red berries and then administers them to the newborn whose heart is being connected to the community or to young men whose hearts are being connected to manhood and all the **Ancestors** who have gone before him.

This example illustrates the greater power in the plant medicines. The plant medicines allow the people to actualize and ingest their spiritual beliefs, their mythology, and their ancestry. From this relationship with the plants the individuals draw strength and the shaman draws magic.

The knowledge of general plant medicines is often widespread throughout the shaman's community. Women in the Amazon, for example, are often the keepers of a wide knowledge of medicinal plants, as well as the cultivation and collection, collection songs, preparation, and usage. Women harvest or collect plants for the general use of the community and often for the shaman specifically. The herbalist is frequently the shaman's wife, though women may also be shamans in their own right.

In indigenous cultures worldwide, the traditional healers could identify hundreds of species of plants by touch, smell, or appearance alone, a feat no university-trained botanist could do. Studies have shown that the Chacobo tribe in Bolivia used 95 percent of the tree species in their local ecosystem; the Tembe people of Brazil used 61.3 percent of the local tree species; and the Káapoor tribe used 76.8 percent. These studies did not take into account the use of plants other than **trees**.

Often these "untrained" healers identify different uses for different "kinds" of the same plant, though a botanist would consider them all the same species. For example, shamans

who work with *ayahuasca* distinguish between different parts of the plant, describing and making use of distinctly different healing or hallucinogenic properties of the plant. They can often distinguish between almost every species of tree in the rain forest merely by the smell, appearance, or feel of the bark.

Many theories have been put forth to explain how these healers know so much about the plant medicines. One theory is that they learned by trial and error. However, this does not explain the variation in parts of plants, preparations, dosages, etc., nor have these people been around long enough, statistically speaking, to have gathered the apparent amount and complexity of information.

Other theories may apply in some cases, but clearly do not explain the vast sum of knowledge being used. "Bitters" or taste may have guided people, since bitterness often indicates alkaloids, which represent the most important chemical components in modern medicine. Another theory is that color equals chemical potency. If a plant substance displays a peculiar color it may contain an interesting chemical. The Doctrine of Signatures is the theory that a plant or plant part that looks like something may somehow be good for treating that thing.

Other scholars suggest that the people learned by observing local animals in nature. However, stories of animals showing humans how to use the plants probably refer to the shaman's **journeys** with **animal spirits**, since these animals taught the humans things far more complicated than what the animals actually do themselves. Others suggest that the people learned through **dreams** and **visions**, and this is perhaps closest to the truth.

The shamans and plant healers explain that they learned to use the plants from the plant spirits themselves, particularly by opening themselves to the wisdom of the plants by ingesting **plant hallucinogens** and

engaging in **plant diets**. And by opening their hearts and minds to the plants, shamans have played a key role in the development and refinement of indigenous plant medicines now in use in Western pharmacology. Almost every plant species used by Western medicine was not discovered through science and research, but was originally discovered and used by indigenous peoples. See also **illness**.

Plotkin, M. J. *Tales of a Shaman's Apprentice: An Ethnologist Searches for New Medicines in the Amazon Rain Forest*. New York: Viking Penguin, 1993.

Schultes, R. E., and R. E. Raffauf. *Vine of the Soul: Medicine Men, Their Plants and Rituals in the Colombian Amazonia*. Santa Fe, NM: Synergetic Press, 2004.

Plant Spirits

Plant spirits are the spiritual aspect of wild plants that may or may not take the form of the plant in **non-ordinary reality**. Like other **helping spirits** (energies found in the invisible world) plant spirits can assume other forms in the spirit world. Plant spirits are a kind of **nature spirit** which is a kind of helping spirit that the **shaman** works with while in an **altered state of consciousness**.

Plant spirits derive their **power** from the **Sun** and the **earth**. Unlike **power animals**, which are helping **spirits** available to all people, plant spirits tend to be available only to shamans and other healers who work with the **healing** powers of plants.

The primary importance of the plant spirits lies in their ability to teach the shaman how to use them. The shaman connects with the plant spirits in an altered state to learn the different applications of the plant for healing the body and the **soul**. The shaman must learn what part of the plant to use, when and how to harvest it, if and how to cultivate it, the **songs** necessary for collection, preparation, and use of the plant, etc.

The amount of information the plant spirits offer is endless.

Human **teachers** can pass large bodies of information about working with **plant medicines** on to **apprentices**. If an apprentice also learns to enter an altered state and connect with the plant spirits to renew the information, correct healing **rituals**, and learn ways to treat new problems, he will become a shaman as well as a **medicine man**. If the apprentice learns only to apply the collected **knowledge** of the teacher, but not to communicate with the plant spirits themselves, then he or she will become a medicine person, but not a shaman.

In some **cultures** the plant spirits are used as helping spirits in the shaman's other healing work, like sucking **extractions** or **soul retrievals**. In other cultures they are primarily teachers. See also **medicine; plant hallucinogens**.

Harner, Michael J. *The Way of the Shaman*. San Francisco: Harper-Collins, 1990.

Vitebsky, Piers. *The Shaman*. London: Little, Brown and Company, 1995.

Plateau Experiences

A plateau experience is a profoundly serene and calm response to a miraculous or awesome experience, relative to the perspective of the individual. This sense of serenity is sustained over time. Like **peak experiences**, plateau experiences are often transcendent, mystical, or religious experiences that are not dependent on location (church or temple) or beliefs (**religion** or faith), nor do they necessarily imply supernatural intervention.

Serenity, defined as relaxation and awareness of the moment, is the distinctive component of plateau experiences. Plateau experiences involve retaining a sense of the ordinary while experiencing a non-ordinary fullness of life. This profound serenity is experienced in contrast to the usually intense,

climactic, and explosively in-the-moment qualities characteristic of peak experiences.

Preconditions for the plateau experience are an awareness of the temporariness of one's own life, an openness to the miraculous, and the somewhat detached perspective of the witness who sees life in the context of the eternal world and is grateful for it. Plateau experiences are a blended experience of pure enjoyment and happiness with a noetic and cognitive element. The plateau experience is a pleasant, contemplative experience of witnessing and appreciating the unitive experience of life, the Universe, and oneself in that Wholeness.

Plateau and peak experiences differ particularly in relation to death. In the peak experience the individual often confronts his or her fear of death. If successful, a part of the pre-peak, identified self dies and the individual experiences a rebirth of his or her authentic self. In the plateau experience individuals are often making peace with death. The revelation of the experience is to see their own mortality in relation to the eternal truths that make up the essence of the world in which they live.

One can learn to live in the state of unitive consciousness; however, it is a lifelong effort. It is earned only through long, hard work and the experience of living, learning, and maturing over time. The particular "spiritual discipline" one follows in this lifelong effort is not as important as the commitment, discipline, work, study, and willingness to take the time to cultivate transcendence.

The content of the experience and the experience itself reveal the nature of reality, humankind's relation to it, and the values inherent in it. Both plateau and peak experiences transcend morals, **ethics**, and dualities, like the distinction between good and evil. They reveal how these parts of life that appeared at odds in the moments before the experience now fit together into the Whole.

The qualities of plateau experiences are known completely, without linear thought, throughout the entire being. In short, they are *grokked*. The following are the defining qualities of plateau experiences. They are shared by peak experiences:

1. The entire universe is perceived of as an integrated and unified Whole in which the individual recognizes his or her place within that Whole.
2. The quality and quantity of concentration is greater and more focused, resulting in enhanced perception of total sight, **sound**, and feeling. The inherent equality in things emerges from this totality, replacing the human habit of arranging things in a hierarchy of importance.
3. In this state of heightened awareness of one's own being, the Being aspect of the external world and external objects becomes apparent. Everything exists as an end in itself, not of a value defined relative to humans.
4. The independent reality of objects and people is more readily apparent as the individual's perception becomes less ego-centered.
5. An altered awareness of **time** allows an awareness of eternity and universality.
6. The world is seen as a whole. Evil, pain, **disease**, and death are accepted, understood, and seen in their proper places in the whole, as unavoidable, necessary, and belonging there.
7. Through this profound acceptance of the whole, the individual is freed from the need to judge, blame, condemn, or be disappointed and can respond with pity, charity, kindness, and perhaps sadness or amusement.
8. The spiritual values and truths of which the world is made become apparent. For example, the world does not merely exist; it is also **sacred**. Reality, then, is perceived as being composed of intrinsic values, which are absolute.
9. The awareness of one's place in the greater Being of the Whole inspires a more passive, receptive, and humble consciousness than is normal for the individual.
10. The individual perceives of unity and integration in the world and tends to move toward fusion, integration, and unity within himself, resolving or transcending the dichotomies, polarities, and conflicts of life.
11. The individual experiences a transient loss of fear, anxiety, inhibition, defense control, perplexity, confusion, conflict, delay, and restraint.
12. The individual experiences an increased awareness of "heaven" as an ever-available state that exists all the time all around.
13. The individual experiences a tendency to move toward uniqueness, the real self, or to become more real.
14. The individual becomes more loving and accepting and, as a result, more spontaneous, honest, and innocent.
15. The individual transcends the experience of living under the laws of the physical world and becomes aware of the influence of the psychological laws.
16. The wholeness of the peak experience frees the individual from habitual neediness that results in constant striving or wishing for more.
17. The individual experiences "unitive consciousness"—a sense of the sacred in the secular. See also **ecstasy; mystical experiences; trance**.

Cleary, T. S., and S. I. Shapiro. "The Plateau Experience and the Post-mortem Life: Abraham H. Maslow's Unfinished Theory." *Journal of Transpersonal Psychology* 27, no. 1 (1995): 1–23.

Krippner, S. "The Plateau Experience: A.H. Maslow and Others." *Journal of Transpersonal Psychology* 4 (1972): 107–120.

Maslow, Abraham H. *Religions, Values, and Peak-Experiences*. New York: Penguin, 1994.

Pogok

The *pogok* is a **fetish**, carved from wood and created to embody a **spirit** or **energy**, like the **masks**. It is created and used by a **tungralik** (**shaman**). The *pogok* is usually burned after being used in a **ceremony** to release the spirit or energy within it, allowing it "to go to sea." See also **Alaskan**; **embodiment**; **Eskimo**.

Lyon, William S. *Encyclopedia of Native American Shamanism: Sacred Ceremonies of North America*. Santa Barbara, CA: ABC-CLIO, 1998.

Polyphasic Cultures

Polyphasic cultures draw their worldview from multiple states of consciousness. Contemplative and **dream** states as well as the waking state inform their view of reality. Examples of polyphasic cultures around the globe are Australian **Aboriginals**, Ecuadorian **Achuar**, West African **Dagara**, and examples of polyphasic disciplines within **cultures** are Jewish Kabbalah, Buddhist *Abhidharma* psychology, and Vedantic philosophy.

Western psychology, philosophy, and culture are predominantly monophasic. They draw their world view almost exclusively from one state of consciousness, the usual waking state. See also **monophasic culture**.

Walsh, Roger. "Phenomenological Mapping: A Method for Describing and Comparing States of Consciousness." *Journal of Transpersonal Psychology* 27, no. 1 (1995): 25–56.

Popal Vuh

The only remaining book of the Quiche Maya or the Book of Council of the Mayan people. The *Popal Vuh* contains stories, history, law, and poetry that together explain the essence of the **Maya** living experience, like the Old Testament Bible or the Koran.

The Maya developed a rich and expressive writing system to record their history. Maya scribes carved limestone, engraved jade, incised bone, and inscribed shell. They also wrote on accordion-folded books made from beaten bark, surfaced with a thin layer of plaster. Only four of thousands of books of Maya **knowledge** survived time and the Spanish conquest. They are all calendar almanacs for timing **ritual** except for the *Popal Vuh*.

Hammond, N. *Ancient Maya Civilization*. New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 1982.

Schele, Linda, and David Freidel. *A Forest of Kings: The Untold Story of the Ancient Maya*. New York: William Morrow, 1990.

Possession

Possession refers to the state of being controlled by a **spirit** or other force. Spirit possession is spontaneous, unintentional, and uncontrolled by the individual being possessed. This state has no purpose other than that of the possessing spirit and is considered an **illness**. The possessed individual is often rendered useless to himself or others and is without control over this **altered state of consciousness**.

In contrast, the state of possession used by the **shaman** is intentional and controlled. The shaman controls the entry into, duration of, and exit from the altered state. It is induced to serve a particular purpose in the **healing** ritual and the shaman is able to direct the **trance** experience toward that purpose. This state of intentional, controlled possession is spirit **embodiment**.

There is an intermediate state of possession which is uncontrolled but intentional and usually induced in a **ritual** context. This altered state is used primarily by novice shamans as a stage in **training** and by non-shamans in **cultures** that value and sanction connection with the Divine through spontaneous possession.

For example, in Indonesia the ability to surrender to states of possession and trance is encouraged from childhood. Throughout the islands people engage in various stages of possession, showing various degrees of ability in using these possession trances. In the beginning, the possessed may appear violent, thrashing and convulsing. As the individual develops the ability to focus and surrender, the thrashing gives way to a controlled possession, during which the individual can be pierced with a **sword**, beaten, or burned with coals and suffer no ill effects.

What makes the possession an act of **shamanism** is the shaman's ability not only to surrender to spirit, but to do so with a purpose and to accomplish that purpose while in trance. The purpose may be **extraction**, **divination**, or a healing ritual for the individual or community.

The explanation for where the shaman's spirit goes while in a possession trance varies culture to culture and shaman to shaman. For example, in Asia it is believed that the individual's spirit leaves the body and travels in the spirit realm. This creates the space for the otherwise disembodied spirit who is called in to help the humans in attendance.

There are areas of the world where full possession is culturally expected of shamans. For example, possession trances are expected throughout Indonesia, in **China**, Haiti, Udamba, and in **South America** from the **Candomblé** practitioners. Shamanic rituals often include a step in which proof of possession is displayed, such as piercing the skin or holding hot coals.

The relationship between the individual and the entering spirit defines the character of the trance stage. The first, transitional stage is characterized by dizziness/lightheadedness, precarious equilibrium, somatic (body) alterations, and cognitive disorganization. The spirit and the normal consciousness of the individual are connected, but they do not share the individual's body.

In the second stage, the spirit has entered the body and its discrete identity emerges. This stage is characterized by the change from the individual's identity to that of the entering spirit, co-identities, unusual behavior (expressions of the possessing spirit), unusual experience, and dissociation by the individual.

The third stage of total possession is transcendent and is available only to those who have mastery over the possession trance. This stage is characterized by the breakdown of the self-body awareness, alternate modalities of experiencing, total involvement, consciousness expansion, and increased **energy**. The process of passing through increasingly deep states of possession may last from just minutes to half an hour.

Both possession and embodiment are considered "the seizure of divinity." However, the former is an illness and the latter a means to cure it. Embodiment is the intentional, controlled possession of an individual who is trained to access spirit through trance and interpret that connection for the good of the community. Possession is also considered the direct touch of god, but is given no greater meaning for the individual or the community.

In general, people have a deeply rooted, human need to experience the presence of the "Divine." It is believed that the "Divine" has manifested when the shaman's ego detaches itself from the body and the merging spirit is allowed full possession. Through possession the shaman serves as a **vehicle** or mouthpiece for the gods and allows the patient to witness a manifestation of the "Divine." See also **mediumship**.

Blair, Lawrence. *Ring of Fire: Exploring the Last Remote Places of the World*. New York: Bantam Books, 1988.

Heinze, R. I. *Shamans of the 20th Century*. New York: Irvington Publishers, Inc., 1991.

Walsh, R. "Shamanic Cosmology: A Psychological Examination of the Shaman's Worldview." *ReVision* 13, no. 2 (1990): 86–100.

Walsh, Roger. "Phenomenological Mapping: A Method for Describing and Comparing States of Consciousness." *Journal of Transpersonal Psychology* 27, no. 1 (1995): 25–56.

Postures

There are four postures used universally across **cultures** to enter various **trance** states. They are standing, sitting, walking, and lying supine.

Standing for long periods of time with focused intention is used to cultivate the inner stillness necessary to enter into full **power** and connect with one's own **spirit**. Sitting postures are used to meditate when seeking wisdom in the face of paradox, perspective, guidance, or inner direction.

Walking (or moving) with intention induces a paradoxical state of inner focus and complete surrender which encourages creative solutions, intuitive insights, and communion with the unknown. Lying supine is the most **healing** posture the body can assume. The lying posture provides access to journeying and **dreaming** altered states.

In addition to the four universal postures, Felicitas Goodman, professor of linguistics and anthropology, has used thirty-one different body postures taken from mythology, experiential research, and archaeological data to induce specific trance states. In Goodman's research, participants are instructed to adopt a particular posture while a **drum** or **rattle** is played to induce trance states.

Goodman's results show some constancy over many years. However, her work has not proved replaceable by other researchers. It is not clear that these postures were used by **shamans** to induce trance states. It is possible that these postures are the result of

shamans working with particular **animal spirits** in trance states induced through more common means. It is also unclear whether or not these postures that are found represented throughout human history were practiced for the same purpose over time. See also **altered states of consciousness** and **journey**.

Arrien, Angeles. *The Four-fold Way: Walking the Paths of the Warrior, Teacher, Healer, and Visionary*. San Francisco: HarperCollins, 1993.

Goodman, Felicitas D. *Where the Spirits Ride the Wind: Trance Journeys and Other Ecstatic Experiences*. Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 1990.

Poswimkya Society

One of two curing societies among the Hopi, the other being the Yayatü. The Poswimkya was the only Hopi society performing cures by sucking and using **Datura** medicinally and to induce **trance**. Though the Poswimkya **fetishes** are still kept at Walpi, the **sucking shamans** of this society were inactive by the 1890s. See also **Yayatü Society**.

Lyon, William S. *Encyclopedia of Native American Shamanism: Sacred Ceremonies of North America*. Santa Barbara, CA: ABC-CLIO, 1998.

Powa

One of two types of supernatural **power** recognized by the Hopi. They differentiate between the power of **tuuhisa**, wielded by the **tuuhikya** (**shaman**), and the power of **powa**, wielded by the **priests** of Hopi ceremonial societies. Powa is neutral; it can be directed to benevolent or malevolent ends.

The **healing** and purifying aspects of **powa** are controlled by the priests and exercised in the annual ceremonies of these Hopi societies. **Powa** is the root of various Hopi words like *powata*, to cure or make perfect; *powaka*, sorcerer or to

use *powa* for **sorcery**; *powalawu*, sacred **ritual**; and *powatawi*, **sacred** song. See also **ceremony** and **song**.

Lyon, William S. *Encyclopedia of Native American Shamanism: Sacred Ceremonies of North America*. Santa Barbara, CA: ABC-CLIO, 1998.

Powaka

A Hopi witch or sorcerer. The *powak taka* is a witch man and the *powak wuqti* is a witch woman. The *powaka* create **illness** by shooting *tukyaini* (**energy intrusion**) into the bodies of their victims, which the **shaman** must remove in a sucking **healing** ritual. See also **ritual**; **sorcery**; **sucking shaman**.

Lyon, William S. *Encyclopedia of Native American Shamanism: Sacred Ceremonies of North America*. Santa Barbara, CA: ABC-CLIO, 1998.

Powamû

An **exorcism** healing **ceremony** performed by the Hopi *Powamwimkya* (*Powamû* society). Members of this society also perform **purification** rituals, called *powatañwû* or *nayochiwa*. See also **healing** and **ritual**.

Lyon, William S. *Encyclopedia of Native American Shamanism: Sacred Ceremonies of North America*. Santa Barbara, CA: ABC-CLIO, 1998.

Power

Shamanic power is defined by the shaman's ability to direct supernatural forces to influence the outcome of natural happenings. The shaman's ability is based on **knowledge** that is in part understanding how the world functions and in part having the ability to act on those functions. The **shaman** accesses and directs power through his or her knowledge of the supernatural or invisible reality and its relationship to the physical world. Intellectual knowledge is not enough to access power.

Shamanic knowledge involves the ability to act and is gained through **training**, skill, and experience. Knowledge is mastered only when the shaman is capable of putting the information into action in a way that manifests the intended result.

Power is hard to acquire. Power is always available; however, it usually comes only to individuals who seek it through personal action and sacrifice. To acquire power one must approach the **spirits** with **humility**. Power demands the cultivation of the virtues of humility, honesty, sincerity, endurance, kindness, sensitivity, awareness, and courage of heart.

Power is easily lost. The "spirits," the special, non-ordinary **energy** through which the shaman receives power, can easily take it away. Shamans can suddenly lose their powers completely as a result of breaking a **taboo** or transgressing **spirit** in some way such that it withdraws permanently and terminates the relationship.

Power can take its toll. Proximity to power requires precautions. Even the accidental misuse of power can cause sickness or death. Since the shaman is filled with power, he or she is often not harmed while immediate family members are the ones stricken. For this reason, shamans often send their offspring to relatives to be raised or they begin their **healing** work after their children are grown. The **helping spirits** can cause **illness**, madness, and death when shamans refuse to do as their helping spirits require.

North American shamans distinguish between "medicine powers" and spirit powers while using them both. **Aboriginal** North Americans understand that everything is alive and contains an animating power that connects everything in the universe. For example, the **Lakota** call this power *wakan* and the **Iroquois** call it *orneda*. Medicine power is the aspect of anything associated with this animating and connecting power that can be used or directed by the shaman.

In **South America** different **cultures** conceive of the shaman's power differently. For example, the Culina shaman's power, his *dori*, is formless in his body and manifests as small stones outside of his body. The Shipibo-Conibo shaman's power is *shinan*, which is created by accumulating and storing *nihue*, the colored energies seen in **trance** and the individual power of plants and animals. The Shipibo-Conibo believe that the world contains a finite amount of *nihue* and *shinan*. The shaman's role is to store and redistribute the *nihue* via his *shinan*.

Power, or *dau*, is cultivated by Siona shamans during several months of isolated training with **plant hallucinogens** in the jungle with a master shaman. When an **apprentice** has reached a certain level of knowledge and power he is able to travel to the highest power in the universe where he is shown a book with all the medicines in it.

Power, though it is established and accumulated in different ways, is the ability of the shaman to conceive of and direct supernatural forces. This knowledge of power is the key concept linking **shamanism** cross-culturally.

Acquisition of Power

Helping spirits are the primary source of power for shamans, though not in every culture. The spirits are not random. The shaman develops a working relationship with one or more helping spirits with whom the shaman may work for his or her entire lifetime. Helping spirits tend to take the forms of animals, mythical animals, plants, **dead shamans**, **ancestors**, cultural heroes, and gods and goddesses. Helping spirits often change form, transforming from human to animal and into beings combining aspects of the two.

Helping spirits are experienced as autonomous spirit entities who supply knowledge and power to the shaman beyond the shaman's ordinary wisdom and strength. Helping spirits tend to take forms that are meaningful to the shaman; however, they are not mental

constructs or archetypes. When a shaman communicates with an animal or plant helping spirit, he or she is communicating with the conscious aspect of the power of that animal or plant species, what would be called **soul** in a human.

Shamans do not pick their helping spirits. The spirits pick the shaman. The following are ways the shaman connects with helping spirits, though the shaman is never in control of what helping spirits, if any, show up. The primary means of connecting with helping spirits is to enter an **altered state of consciousness**, or trance. Shamans use both journeying trances, wherein the shaman's soul enters the realm of the helping spirits, and **embodiment** trances, wherein the helping spirit enters the shaman's body in the physical realm. The shaman connects with helping spirits through altered states induced in many ways, primarily by drumming, dancing, and ingesting plant hallucinogens. Shamans also use vision questing, which takes many different forms in different cultures, to connect with helping spirits.

Some shamans gain their powers through relationships with special, non-ordinary energies that are not helping spirits. These shamans do enter altered states to perform their shamanic work; however, they do not experience autonomous spirit helpers. For example, the **San of Africa** cultivate the ability to call up a power named *num* from the earth. When *num* is sufficiently heated it travels up the healer's spine and into the hands rendering the healer able to heal with this power through touch.

The indigenous peoples of northern coastal and north-central California and Nevada share the concept of "**pains**." Pains are a non-ordinary energy that is both the **disease**-causing energy and the energy the shaman collects to gather power. Once a pain is acquired, the shaman must learn to control the pain to be able to use it in healing.

Ingesting plant hallucinogens is in and of itself a means of gathering power, not just connecting with helping spirits. For example, in South America where the use of *ayahuasca* is prevalent, the *ayahuasca* is itself also a doctor. The plant hallucinogen has power, will, and knowledge of its own to offer the shaman in addition to the extraordinary powers granted by inducing an altered state.

Shamans travel to places of power to gain power from the spirits of the place. Power manifests in special places, some are natural **sacred** sites and some are **shrines**, charged with the **prayers** and **offerings** of thousands of people. Often spectacular, out-of-the-ordinary features of nature are regarded as sacred, as are natural springs and **caves**. These natural places of power are often the sites chosen for **vision quests**.

In some cultures shamanic powers can be inherited. In other cultures students can purchase teachings from a master shaman. However, within these traditions the shamanic powers that are inherited or purchased are not considered as strong as the powers received spontaneously and directly from spirit.

Training and the Mastery of Power

Although spirits may do the actual healing work, shamanic power depends on the shaman's ability to control his or her trance states. The power of the spirits is limitless, but there are limits to an individual shaman's ability to manifest that power. The shaman's concentrated effort and accuracy in interpretation plays a significant role in shaping the results of a healing **ritual**.

Shamanic power is an energy form of pure consciousness that is directed in the altered state. Without training and experience this energy can easily have unintended results. The way this pure energy is used and how it manifests in **space** and **time** to help or to heal is determined by the combined wills of the shaman and the helping spirit.

Power operates according to specific sacred rules that must be followed by

the shaman if he or she is to direct that power. Those rules can only be understood in a state of being during which the shaman directly experiences a connection to the sacredness in all existence. Once understood, it takes great discipline to exercise the rules well.

In most cultures the spirits teach the shaman how to achieve the necessary state of connectedness and to direct power. In other cultures the training also involves a master shaman passing on a magical substance that embodies knowledge gained through **visions** and personal sacrifice to the apprentice.

Storing Power

Power resides in **power objects**, **songs**, **dances**, specific actions, and magical substances. The spirits teach shamans the songs and dances that call in specific powers or that carry the healing power for specific illnesses. When performing these dances or songs the shaman accesses the related powers.

Power can manifest in objects that occur naturally or reside in objects created to contain power, like **masks** or **talismans**. These sacred objects can become endowed with power naturally, for example, the *tunkan* is a stone with very special powers that is created wherever lightning strikes the ground, or the power is called in through ritual.

In many cultures power is passed on from shaman to shaman through magical substances or objects. In the Peruvian Amazon, for example, the shaman stores *yachay*, a thick white **phlegm**, in his upper stomach. *Yachay* contains helping spirits and **tsentsak**, **magical darts** used in healing or harming. *Yachay* is a means of storing power related to knowledge. That power is passed from shaman to apprentice by drinking the shaman's *yachay*.

Handling Power

Power must be approached with caution to protect oneself and to protect the power from being diminished by pollution or contamination. In cultures where people work with power objects,

there are protocols for handling power, power objects, for singing **power songs**, and approaching places of power. For example, acts of personal **purification**, from simple meditation to bathing, fasting, vomiting, and sweating, to more complex rituals of **cleansing** are completed before approaching or handling anything of (or containing) sacred power.

There is also protocol for handling shamans. The shaman gathers power through ritual. Those ritual experiences endow the shaman with many powers and perspectives that keep the shaman protected and powerful. Charged with power in this way, the shaman may be dangerous to others who are too weak or are not protected by similar energies. In some cultures there are taboos around touching the shaman, the shaman's possessions, and the common objects the shaman uses, like dishes.

Restoring Power

Shamans must replenish their own power and power objects regularly. They do so through cleansing, through a literal connection to nature, like submerging in a sacred spring or taking retreat on a sacred mountain, and through ritual. On a daily basis shamans restore power by taking care to always complete the cycle of energy they are using by honoring the energies available to them, giving thanks, and making offerings of gratitude to the energies they draw on. Shamans also use physical disciplines, diet, fasting, and enemas to restore their power. See also **drum; journey; medicine; power places; power, abuse of; power, variation in amount of**.

Heinze, R. I. *Shamans of the 20th Century*. New York: Irvington Publishers, Inc., 1991.

Langdon, E. Jean, and G. Bear. *Portals of Power: Shamanism in South America*. Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1992.

Lyon, William S. "North American Indian Perspectives on Working with Sacred Power." *Shaman's Drum* 16 (1989).

Stevens, J., and L. S. Stevens. *Secrets of Shamanism: Tapping the Spirit Power Within You*. New York: Avon Books, 1988.

Power, Abuse of

The shaman's relationship with **power** is more than just the accumulation of vast quantities of power. The quality of what the **shaman** does with the power determines the shaman's standing in the community. Power is, of itself, neither good nor bad. All power is available for misuse or abuse. Therefore, the right use of power is always a concern in any shamanic act.

Shamanic techniques are morally neutral. The intention behind the use of a technique determines its benevolence or malevolence. Most **shamanic** cultures draw a distinction between shamanic acts and acts of **sorcery**. However, it is left to the individual shaman to determine how he or she will act in each situation.

In some cultures the distinction between shamans and sorcerers is unclear largely because of the way **illness** is defined. In these cultures the source of all illness and accidents is believed to be an act of aggression by a shaman in a neighboring community. **Healing** almost always involves **extraction of** the source of the illness and sending it back to the neighboring people and their shaman. Therefore, a refusal to "attack" the neighboring shaman is a refusal to heal one's own people.

Even regular people who are not shamans can abuse their power through actions that show disregard or disrespect of the preciousness and interconnectedness of life. **Taboos** regulating actions, like incest or murder, as well as prescribed actions, like returning every

seal bladder after a kill so that another seal can regenerate, guide individuals in the areas where their actions in the physical realm have profound negative effects in the **spirit** realm or on the community as a whole. See also **sorcery**.

Matthews, John, et al. *The Celtic Shaman: A Handbook*. Rockport, MA: Element Books Ltd., 1991.

Somé, M.P. *Ritual: Power, Healing, and Community*. New York: Viking Penguin, 1997.

Vitebsky, Piers. *The Shaman*. London: Little, Brown and Company, 1995.

Power, Variation in Amount of

In every shamanic **culture**, distinctions are made between **shamans** relative to the amount of **power**. In most cultures the distinction is based on the type of **spirits** the shaman works with and in what type of **trance**. In some, but by no means all cultures, this distinction also falls along **gender** lines. For example, Sora shamans of the lesser traditions are male and work mostly in a **divination** trance state. Sora shamans of the greater traditions are female and work mostly with spirits in deep **embodiment** trances, conducting funerals and healings.

In other cultures the more powerful shamans are black shamans who work with **spirits of the dead** in deep trance states. Shamans of lesser powers are white shamans who work only with **Upperworld** spirits in light trance or **prayer**. This distinction is common among Indonesian peoples and in Siberian cultures like the **Yakuts**, Buryats, and Tatars. The white shamans work only with spirits of the Upperworld and function primarily as **priests**. Black shamans work with all spirits of the **Lowerworld** and **Middleworld** and function as shamans as defined in this text. Whether one becomes a black or white shaman is not the shaman's choice, but is determined by the spirits and the way in which they choose to work through the shaman.

In other cultures distinctions are drawn at the level of **initiation** the shaman has successfully completed. As a result shamans may specialize in the areas of shamanic work in which they are best supported by their **spirit** help. In areas of Lapland, **Africa**, and **North America**, for example, shamans fall generally into three groups. There are those who specialize in divination. The next level includes those who cure through prayers, **blessings**, and **power retrieval**. The most powerful group includes shamans who work with **soul loss** and the spirits of the dead.

In every culture shamans traditionally work with an assortment of other specialists. Some examples of these healers are, herbalists, bone-setters, midwives, wise people, **dream** interpreters, and people who foretell the future. Today this list would also involve naturopaths, chiropractors, medical doctors, etc.

There are variations in shamanic power even among shamans who all work in deep **altered states of consciousness** with the spirits of the dead. For example the **Inuit** explain that the more pain and suffering a shaman takes upon himself during **training**, the greater his powers will be in his practice. All shamans adjust the length and depth of their **journeys** according to their power. If they do not have the power to succeed in the **healing**, a shaman of greater power is called on to complete the healing. In some cultures the shamans work in groups to effect a cure with their accumulated powers and skills. A shaman's powers depend on strength, ability, and capacity to understand the true nature of the **Kosmos** as shown by spirit.

Powers once gained can diminish or be withdrawn if dishonored or treated with disrespect. There is a direct correlation between the strength in the shaman's personal belief in spirits and the manifestation of **medicine** powers. When a shaman's belief in the spirits is undermined, for example by conversion to any of the high **religions**, the

shaman's ability to display his or her medicine powers is weakened.

Mature shamans may eventually develop abilities that initially they could only perform while in an altered state, such as the ability to see into the spirit world while in their ordinary state of consciousness. Nonetheless, the boundaries and limitations of any shaman's powers are defined by his or her relationships with **helping spirits**.

The work of any one particular shaman will change over time. The shaman's life is a path of mastery. The shaman's skills and power will grow in direct relation to the evolution of his or her spiritual awareness and trance experience over time. Because of the importance of initiation and ego transformation in the shaman's work, variations among shamans of one ethnic group will often be greater than the variations between shamans of different ethnic groups. See also **black and white shamans** and **Buryat (Buriat)**.

Heinze, R. I. *Shamans of the 20th Century*. New York: Irvington Publishers, Inc., 1991.

Kalweit, Holger. *Dreamtime and Inner Space: The World of the Shaman*. Boston: Shambhala Publications, 1988.

Vitebsky, Piers. *The Shaman*. London: Little, Brown and Company, 1995.

Walsh, R. *The Spirit of Shamanism*. New York: Llewellyn Publications, 1990.

Power Animals

Power animals are **helping spirits** in animal form who guard and protect the **shaman** in the physical world and in the spirit world. Though it is not possible to define any helping spirit in an absolute sense, a power animal is best understood as the spirit of a species of animal, e.g., bear, giraffe, or anaconda. Power **animal spirits** are one source of the type of power the shaman draws on from helping spirits to use in **healing**.

Power animals serve as conduits for wisdom, guidance, and information

from the spirit world. When the shaman uses an **embodiment** trance for healing or conducting **ritual**, it is often the power animal who works through the shaman. In many **cultures** the shaman develops a deep relationship with one particular animal who then summons other helping spirits or allies as they are needed to perform specific aspects of the shaman's work.

The shaman knows that there could be no power for healing without the spirits of animals, plants, and Nature. Shamans believe that the animals are manifestations of a natural power that is stronger and wiser than human beings. However, shamans do not lift animal spirits up to the status of deities, nor do they lower them to the status of a mere psychological metaphor. The shaman is empowered by his or her relationship with the power animals. Their relationship is a partnership.

The partnership with the power animals is not easily forged. The shaman must prove himself worthy of the power the animal spirit offers and then learn from the animal spirit how to use that power. In many cultures, strict **taboos** must also be observed by the shaman to maintain the relationship with the power animals, e.g., not eating the flesh of the animals that help them. In all cultures, offering gratitude and respect for the power animal's help in human matters is fundamental to maintaining the working relationship.

Ancient **cave** paintings reflect the use of ritual by humans to evoke the mysterious **sacred** powers of different animals. Gaining access to the special qualities of the animal spirits is one facet of the extraordinary relationship between the shaman and the power animals. The power animals are also **teachers**. They may teach the shaman **power songs** and/or give the shaman the **words** to invoke power (to call power in) or to cast power (to send power out). Still other shamans learn the **language** of the animals and at times speak that language while in **trance**. In some Australian tribes

acquiring the power to speak to **birds** and animals is one mark of shamanic abilities.

Totem spirits, who are inherited through a family line, and **tutelary spirits** are specific types of power animals. Power animals are also referred to as guardian spirits, allies, and spirit helpers. The fact that an individual has a relationship with a power animal does not make them a shaman. Most children have guardian spirits and, in many cultures, all adults must connect with a helping spirit as an aspect of their **initiation** into adulthood.

Eliade, Mircea. *Shamanism: Archaic Techniques of Ecstasy*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1964.

Harnier, Michael J. *The Way of the Shaman*. San Francisco: Harper-Collins, 1990.

Redmond, L. *When the Drummers Were Women: A Spiritual History of Rhythm*. New York: Three Rivers Press, 1997.

Power Displays

Power displays is a general term for any display of supernatural feats by a **shaman** using one or more medicine **powers**. Power displays are generally part of a competition and therefore usually outside of the context of a **healing** ritual. A shaman displays what he can do with the aid of his **spirit** help to make those skills a matter of public record. These feats have been well documented around the world for many centuries by non-indigenous observers. Because the intensity of these displays has declined, scholars believe that the supernatural abilities of shamans were far greater in former times.

Power displays are most often public demonstrations or competitions among shamans. Examples of common power displays include, but are not limited to, displays of **mastery of fire**, immersion in boiling liquids, eating hot coals, death in the fire and rebirth, or flying across the **sky** as a burning fireball,

changing from form to form in **shapeshifting** contests, or causing the head of one's **power animal** to protrude from the mouth, shooting, killing, or maiming oneself or another and then regenerating the maimed part or resurrecting the dead, swallowing arrows, knives, slats, or sticks without harm, chewing completely and swallowing objects (stones, bones, etc.) or body parts (eyes, hands, etc.) and then reproducing them whole and functional, or causing animal skins or other inanimate objects to walk, fly, or **dance** about.

A shaman's success is based on his or her ability to handle the powers given by spirit. Across **North America**, for example, shamans of many different **cultures** gathered together to publicly display and often to compete with supernatural powers. In some geographical regions, these performances of power would serve to rank the shamans within their particular areas. These competitions were also an opportunity for a shaman who felt his powers were not being recognized to display them for the community.

These public competitions between shamans brought forth some of the most spectacular human feats ever recorded. These amazing displays of power, were for the most part just displays. In a sense they were advertising and did not serve a role in the healing, **divination**, or **medicine** work of the shaman. The competitions were primarily among male shamans and, though there are accounts of women competing equally with men, they are much less frequent. Female shamans do not appear to have needed to demonstrate their spirit powers in the same way.

On occasion these displays of power were associated with actual healing **rituals**. Usually performed at the beginning of the ritual, the power display served to gain the confidence of the patient and to clear doubt from the minds of those in the audience. For example, *midewiwin* **initiations** were

opportunities for older shamans to display their skills, ensuring **humility** in the minds of the initiates. Similarly, the **Shaking Tent Ceremony** involves many displays of power, for example the shaking of the tent itself and the way in which the shaman is magically freed from the chords with which he is bound in the beginning of the **ceremony**. See also **decline in power**; **midewiwin**.

Lyon, William S. *Encyclopedia of Native American Shamanism: Sacred Ceremonies of North America*. Santa Barbara, CA: ABC-CLIO, 1998.

Power Objects

A power object is a physical object in which **power** resides. The object itself can be naturally occurring or created by hand. The power within the object can be naturally occurring or invited in by the **shaman** through an **embodiment** or empowerment **ritual**.

Power is found manifest in many natural things such as stones, meteorites, plants, shells, and animal parts like claws, **feathers**, hide, bones, teeth, or fur. The **Lakota tunkan** is an example of a naturally occurring object with naturally occurring power. The *tunkan* is a stone that is found where lightning strikes the ground. The *tunkan* is endowed with its unique powers by the lightning when it strikes.

Power is made manifest through ritual in other objects. The **sacred pipe**, the most familiar North American power object, is created by hand from sacred stone. Power is embodied in the pipe through rituals. That power is then activated when the stem is connected to the bowl. The ritual **masks** of Bali and the False Face masks of the **Iroquois** are also examples of power objects created by hand, as are **drums**, **rattles**, and parts of the shaman's **costume**.

Some power objects occur naturally and are enhanced through ritual. For example, **huacas** are stones gathered by shamans in **South America**. The shaman is often directed in **dreams** to

the exact stone and exactly where to find it, though that may be many days walk up a mountainside. *Huacas* are selected because of their own inherent power. Then, they are charged through ritual.

Power objects do not represent power. They are the power. To work with the object is to access the power contained within it. A power object is not a thing; it is alive. The living **spirit** in the object teaches the shaman what he or she needs to know to work with and care for the object. This is particularly important for new objects or for objects around which there are no traditions for care and handling.

Power objects can be created for single use or for all time. Many power objects are created for a specific purpose or ritual and then destroyed in the ritual process or after the ritual is complete. Other objects, like **medicine bundles** or False Face masks, are handed down for generations. Whether an object is empowered temporarily for the duration of the ritual or **ceremony** or permanently is determined by the purpose(s) for which the power object will be used.

The power in the object can be directed toward benevolent or malevolent ends. Power objects can be used to enhance any **energy** and then to direct that energy. They are used for **healing**, magic, or as a means to carry a particular energy into a ritual or ceremony.

There are protocols and **taboos** involved in working with power objects. The objects are living, and therefore they must be "fed" **offerings**, **prayers**, and gratitude, and cared for. When the life of a power object is complete, the power embodied in the object must be released. For example, the ancient Mesoamericans created holes in power objects and the tops of the heads of stone statues to release the power embodied there, effectively "closing" the object.

The use of power objects is not idolatry. In idolatry, the original revelation is codified and the connection to the

spirit power in the object is not necessarily still alive. The **sacred** relationship with that power gets lost in concretization of object as a symbol and codification of the related rituals. The shaman's work with power objects is a vital, spontaneous relationship. To disrespect the living power within the object through idolatry would result in the power leaving completely or staying and causing problems, injury, and accidents.

There are many stories of the mistreatment or dishonoring of a power object causing problems that range from mischief to death. For example, *Kukapihe* (the Death Stone), a sacred stone thought to be originally from Egypt, was brought with a companion stone to the island of Hawaii in the thirteenth century by Pa'ao, a **kahuna** priest. The palm-sized, white, oval, glazed stone is believed to embody the spiritual forces of the god Ku. Its female companion stone was held by **kahuna** **priests** on the island of Kauai.

In time *Kukapihe* was passed to Kamehameha the Great who passed it to his son, Kuamo'o, who passed the stone to his son, Kaniho, a **kahuna** (shaman) and **teacher of contemporary shaman** Daddy Bray. Kaniho promised the stone to Bray, but on Kaniho's death it was not relinquished by his grieving widow. In the three months that followed the stone began to intensify the fearful energies of the widow's family. After the third death in her family, she gave *Kukapihe* to a nephew to deliver to Bray and the dying stopped.

Power objects must be maintained just as the physical body of the shaman must be maintained. When properly maintained, power objects can be used to enhance other energies, like emotions, mental concentration, or intention. In the act of enhancement the power object may take on the energies involved. If those energies are malevolent, fearful, or disharmonious, the object will need to be cleansed. On the other hand, energies that are benevolent or life affirming can charge the object, adding to the power of the

object. See also **amulet**; **charm**; **False Face Society**; **fetish**; **Mesoamerica**; **talisman**.

Heinze, R. I. *Shamans of the 20th Century*. New York: Irvington Publishers, Inc., 1991.

Maslow, Abraham H. *Religions, Values, and Peak-Experiences*. New York: Penguin, 1994.

Vitebsky, Piers. *The Shaman*. London: Little, Brown and Company, 1995.

Power Places

Power manifests in special places, some are natural **sacred** sites and others are man-made **shrines**, charged with the **prayers** and **offerings** of thousands of people. Often the spectacular, out-of-the-ordinary features of Nature are regarded as sacred, as are natural springs and **caves**. These natural places of power are often the sites chosen for **vision quests**.

Shamans travel to places of power to recharge, cleanse, and replenish their **energy** and power. In some places the power manifests as **spirit** beings who "live" in that place. In other places the power is of the place itself, in a sense the place has its own beingness. These places are believed to be the places where the gods have stopped, touching the **earth** and leaving their essence.

Power places must be approached with a certain amount of caution. There are often protocols, such as **cleansing** before entering, and **taboos** regarding behaviors that are inappropriate relative to the powers of the place. For example, Native Americans of many different tribes traveled to what is now the Zion canyonlands for **ritual**. However, they always left at night because sleeping overnight in the canyon was taboo. Power places are best avoided by the unprepared.

Langdon, E. Jean, and G. Bear. *Portals of Power: Shamanism in South America*. Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1992.

Lyon, William S. *Encyclopedia of Native American Shamanism: Sacred Ceremonies of North America*. Santa Barbara, CA: ABC-CLIO, 1998.

Power Retrieval

In the broadest sense, power retrievals and **extractions**, which involve returning or removing **energy** from the patient respectively, are the two kinds of **shamanic healing**. However, power retrieval generally refers to the shaman's efforts to reunite the patient with **spirit** energies to guard his or her health and to help the individual to live out his or her soul's unique purpose in this lifetime.

The **powers**, or energies, retrieved are usually **helping spirits**, like **power animals** or **ancestor** spirits. Power retrievals can also involve retrieving the power of an internal organ, an acupuncture meridian, an archetype, a chakra, or a dissociated part of the patient's personality.

There are three general types of powers, or energies, that the **shaman** retrieves from **non-ordinary reality** for his or her patient. The simplest energy is information, for example, a **diagnosis** of the presenting problem, answers to the client's questions, remedies, or **healing** rituals. Retrieving this energy is called a **divination**. The most complex energy is part of the patient's vital essence, like a lost soul or soul part. The return of this energy is a **soul retrieval**. The return of any powers, or energies, that are not lost souls, soul parts, or information is a power retrieval.

The process of a power retrieval is very much like that of a soul retrieval:

1. The shaman connects with a helping spirit and enters his or her working **trance** state, thus entering non-ordinary reality.
2. The shaman diagnoses the problem and discovers where the necessary power of the patient can be found (divination).
3. The shaman asks the helping spirits to take pity on the patient, finds the necessary power, and returns.

4. The shaman returns the power to the patient's body, usually by blowing it into the patient's heart and the top of the head.

5. The shaman thanks the helping spirits for their assistance, exits the trance state, reenters **ordinary reality**, and closes the **ritual** space.

The kind of helping spirit that responds to the shaman's plea varies by person, **culture**, and geography. Some examples are **animal spirits**, **nature spirits**, ancestor spirits, and elementals. The helping spirit offers itself of its own volition.

There are many traditional and contemporary causes of power loss. Possible symptoms of power loss are depression, weakness, lack of mental alertness or self-confidence, and chronic **illness** or mishap. Power loss leaves the individual vulnerable to contagious **disease** and harmful, energetic intrusions.

Power loss also occurs when an individual's behavior has created disharmony with the spirit world. To heal, the individual must take action in ordinary reality to return to harmony with the spirit world and reconnect with spirit. The shaman divines the necessary ritual actions the individual must take.

Shamans replenish their own power (energy) through their connection to Nature, for example submerging in **sacred** springs or taking retreat on a sacred mountain. They complete the cycle of energy-sharing by honoring the energies available to them, giving thanks and making **offerings** of gratitude to the energies they draw on. Shamans maintain their power (energy) through their daily physical discipline and **diet**, including what they eat, fasting, and enemas.

Harner, Michael J. *The Way of the Shaman*. San Francisco: Harper-Collins, 1990.

Heinze, R. I. *Shamans of the 20th Century*. New York: Irvington Publishers, Inc., 1991.

Stevens, J., and L. S. Stevens. *Secrets of Shamanism: Tapping the Spirit Power Within You*. New York: Avon Books, 1988.

Power Song

A power song is a **song** taught to the **shaman** by a **spirit** for the purpose of calling on that spirit to gain access to its **power**. By **singing** the song the shaman calls the spirit into his or her body or into the **ritual** space. The power song taught to an individual by his or her own spirit is used to instantaneously gather personal power. The singing of a power song should always be done with correct attention and focus and never assumed lightly.

Being granted the power of song by spirit is an honor that must be earned. For example, North American shamans take **vision quests**, in the hope, but not the guarantee, that spirit will honor them with a **sacred** song. Power songs belong to the individual to whom they were given, and it is an abuse of power to **sing** another person's song. See also **power, abuse of**.

Lyon, William S. *Encyclopedia of Native American Shamanism: Sacred Ceremonies of North America*. Santa Barbara, CA: ABC-CLIO, 1998.

Prayer

Prayer is a sincere and humble act to beseech, petition, confess, praise, or give gratitude to **spirit** through thought, word, **song, dance**, or **sacred** actions or **postures**. Genuine prayer requires enormous effort and will on the part of the individual praying.

The power of prayer is enhanced by cultivating within one's being and expressing through one's actions the virtues of **humility**, honesty, sincerity, courage to be loving, endurance, kindness, sensitivity, and awareness. These virtues are so essential to the efficacy of prayer that the elders of traditional

indigenous **cultures** begin to teach these virtues in early childhood. Praying is a fundamental social activity in these cultures.

Genuine prayer also requires the ability to focus attention inward, to center, and to calm the normal activity of the mind. This capacity to go within is essential both to the ability to pray and to find the answers to one's prayers and questions.

The efficacy of prayer can be enhanced by the preparation and **sacrifice** of appropriate **offerings**. Inappropriate, insincere, or excessive offerings are not received by spirit and thus do not enhance the power of prayer. Genuine prayers require a large amount of time to practice and prepare. Time is invested in creating offerings, centering the self, and activities to cleanse, such as fasting or participation in a **sweat lodge purification**. It is not unusual for an individual within an indigenous culture to spend several hours a day engaged in prayer or preparation to pray.

Through this focus and preparation the prayer becomes strong. It takes form as a real thing in the consciousness. If the prayer becomes strong enough, it is conscious, taking on a life of its own in the world. It is believed that the prayers of the shaman are all sufficiently strong to become conscious things in the world.

Lyon, William S. "North American Indian Perspectives on Working with Sacred Power." *Shaman's Drum* 16 (Mid-spring 1989): 33-39.

Priest

A keeper of **ceremony** whose position is secured through **knowledge**, the priest is distinguished from the **shaman**, who is a creator of **ritual** and whose position is secured through the ability to enter **trance** states and bring the **powers** of the **spirit** world to the aid of people.

While it is accurate to refer to shamans as priests and vice versa in a few **cultures**, like that of the **Q'ero** of Peru, these terms are more commonly used in ways that confuse the deep distinction between these two roles. Not all shamans function as priests, though some do. Very few priests have the **training** or skill to function as shamans. In many cultures the roles, training, and **initiation** are quite distinct. They work with different powers and are called by different names in the **languages** of their cultures.

Within the context of **shamanism**, the use of the term "priest" often leads to confusion, as indigenous priests are as different from those of Christianity as they are from shamans in their own culture. Although the term "priest" is frequently used in the literature, it has inherent weaknesses when applied to shamanism.

Priests are liturgical officiants whose authority does not rest on personal or direct experience with the deity or supernatural. They preside at ceremonies and over congregations using a fixed system of beliefs, writings, and codified rituals. They support and preach a religious belief system without the power to adapt or change that system.

Shamans, though often characterized as priests, are distinguished from priests in that the shaman's authority rests on his or her personal experiences with the deity and the supernatural. Empowered by this direct relationship with the supernatural, the shaman is able to conduct both rituals and ceremonies and to adapt the spiritual discipline over time as directed by spirit.

Primal Bisexual Divinity

A primal bisexual divinity is a deity who changes **gender**, is of both genders simultaneously, or is without gender. The name was used by author Joseph Campbell to describe those deities who are an important reoccurring theme in the **myths** of indigenous peoples.

Gender transformation is one of many transformations common in the **helping spirits** primary to **shamanism**. The primal bisexual divinity is often the initiator from whom the **shaman** and the **transformed shaman** receive his or her **powers**. Examples of primal bisexual divinities from different **cultures** follow:

The **Inuit** goddess, White Whale Woman, transformed herself into a woman-man to marry a woman of the Fly Agaric clan. (Fly Agaric is the **amanita muscaria** mushroom, a sacred **plant hallucinogen** used by shamans in the northern regions.) The **Koryak** of **Siberia** tell many stories of transformation involving **Fly Agaric mushrooms** and Raven. Big Raven, the Creator, his wife Miti, their son Eme'mqut, and his wives, appear in many stories involving gender transformations.

Hidatsa shamans, both females and **gender-variant males**, enter **trance** and embody a triune goddess who manifests as a magpie. This triune goddess is in part Village Old Woman (creator of women), in part Holy Woman of the Four Directions, and in part Holy Woman Above.

The **balian** and **basir** (shamans) of the **Ngaju Dayk** of Borneo embody Mahatala-Jata, an androgynous deity. Mahatala is the male aspect, a hornbill who lives on a mountaintop and rules the **Upperworld**. Jata is the female aspect, a watersnake who lives in the sea and rules the **Lowerworld**. The two aspects are joined by a jeweled bridge, the rainbow, to create the total godhead. The shamans of the **Iban Dyak** work with the spirit of Menjaya Raja Manang, the world's first healer. Menjaya was a male who became a female, or androgynous being, to be able to heal his brother's wife. See also **mushrooms**.

Conner, Randy P. *Blossom of Bone: Reclaiming the Connections Between Homoeroticism and the Sacred*. San Francisco: HarperCollins, 1993.

Primordial Sea

Primordial sea refers to the theme that all life arose out of a fundamental substance of creation that existed before the beginning of the Universe. This theme is woven through the creation **myths** of almost every **culture**. The exact nature of this fundamental substance is unknown. Thus all of life arose from the **Great Mystery**.

Psilocybe Mushrooms

Several species of **mushrooms** containing the psychoactive constituents psilocybine and psilocine, which are unique to these mushrooms and not found in other plants. These mushrooms are found throughout the Americas and Europe.

Psilocybe mushrooms have been employed as **sacred** plant **entheogens** since the time of the ancient **Aztecs** in Mexico and Guatemala. Few psychoactive plants are more revered. They continue to be used by **shamans** in these regions to enter **trance** and gain guidance from **spirit** during **healing** rituals.

The Aztec name, *Teonanácatl*, means "divine, wondrous, or awesome mushroom." As a term of endearment and reverence these mushrooms are also known as Little Flowers of the Gods. See also **ritual**.

Psyche

The psyche is a construct of Western thought that is defined simultaneously as the **soul**, the self, or the personality. The psyche is believed to be made up of the id, the ego, and the superego, including both the conscious and unconscious components.

The psyche is the vital principle of corporeal matter that is a distinct mental or spiritual entity coextensive with, but independent of, the body. Shamanic **cultures** generally experience mental and spiritual entities coexisting with, but independent of, the body. These aspects are usually seen as separate parts of the multiple human soul.

The shamanic explanation of the soul is culture specific and, where the information is available, it is found within the individual entries.

Psychomythology

Psychomythology is the expression of an individual's life **dream** or personal **myth** through his or her inherent wisdom and love nature. Psychomythology is the innate story of the **psyche**, an aspect of the self that is composed of three parts: *logos*, inherent wisdom; *eros*, love nature; and *mythos*, life dream or myth.

Arrien, Angeles. *The Four-fold Way: Walking the Paths of the Warrior, Teacher, Healer, and Visionary*. San Francisco: HarperCollins, 1993.

Psychonavigation

A meditative technique for journeying in a light **trance** that does not use **sonic driving** or **psychotropic plants**. It is necessary to have the ability to relax the mind and the body and to have faith that the process will work.

J. Perkins explains that to psychonavigate means to travel through the **psyche** to a place where you need to be. This place can be the **non-ordinary reality** version of a physical place: where one finds game, fresh **water**, or a site for a home. Or it can be a non-physical place: where one finds answers, receives **healing**, or finds creative inspiration. See also **journey**.

Perkins, J. *Psychonavigation: Techniques for Travel Beyond Time*. Rochester, VT: Destiny Books, 1990.

Psychopathology and Shamans

Since first contact, people of European descent have judged **shamans** to be hysterics, schizophrenics, mentally deranged, psychotic, idiots, fantasy-prone, charlatans, or epileptics because of the shaman's use of **altered states of consciousness**. There is ample evidence

today that shamans are not as a group mentally ill; however the shaman's mental health is not the issue. The questions is whether or not the trance states used by the shaman in ritual are in themselves pathological.

In recent research, careful attention has been paid to the specific qualities of **shamanic altered states of consciousness** as compared to those of pathological altered states. Through this research it is clear that shamanic altered state experiences differ significantly from the experiences defined in traditional categories of mental **illness**.

Shamanic Possession vs. Hysteria

Shamans in a state of spirit **possession**, or **embodiment** trance, often exhibit shaking seizures, distorted physiognomy, speaking in an unknown **language**, or erratic behavior. These qualities are close to the classic description of symptoms of hysteria. However, unlike hysteria, the shaman can intentionally induce and terminate the embodiment trance. The shaman exhibits mastery, or control, of the altered state and is able to use the altered state purposefully.

Shamanic possession states are not false or acted out. They are authentic, unique experiences with qualities that range from quite lucid, leaving the shaman with consciousness during the trance state and memory afterward, to complete amnesia, leaving the shaman without awareness or memory of what occurs during the trance.

Shamanic Journey vs. Schizophrenia

The shamanic **journey**, or **soul flight**, involves a profound sensory experience of **non-ordinary reality**, usually with a strong visual component and communication with non-ordinary reality beings, or **spirits**. These qualities appear to be delusions or hallucinations which are associated with schizophrenia and other more serious disorders.

However, unlike a schizophrenic, the shaman controls the journey, inducing and terminating it at will, all the while aware that he or she is in non-ordinary

reality and using the altered state purposefully. Unlike delusions, the journey experience is clearly distinguished from **ordinary reality** events.

John Walsh, doctor of psychiatry, philosophy, and anthropology, has shown through detailed phenomenological mapping of a range of altered states that schizophrenic episodes and the shamanic journey differ significantly in control, concentration, self-sense, quality of the experience, content, and quality of distortion.

Shamans exhibit controlled entry into and exit from trance and partial control over the content of their experience, while schizophrenics experience a dramatic reduction of control in all aspects of their episode. The shaman's concentration increases and flows from event to event in the journey, while the schizophrenic's concentration significantly decreases.

In the journey the shaman experiences his or her **soul** focused and empowered by a connection to all things, while the schizophrenic experiences a disorganization and disintegration of self accompanied by an unpleasant inability to distinguish self from others. The shaman's feelings during the journey experience range from occasionally frightening to often ecstatic, while the schizophrenic's feelings during an episode are rarely positive and often unpleasant, distorted, and inappropriate.

The content of the shaman's journey is organized in a way that benefits others, sometimes profoundly. Though the shaman is not always able to communicate while in trance, the trance is controlled and the communication coherent upon return. The content of the schizophrenic's experience is of no benefit to himself or others. It is highly disorganized, awareness of the environment is distorted, and communication is incoherent. In short, shamanic journeys enable the shaman to contribute to the **art**, intellect, physical well-being, and spiritual leadership of the community, while schizophrenic episodes leave

the individual significantly challenged in his ability to function socially.

A survey of the most current research shows that there is a clear distinction between the intentional altered states of the shaman and the pathological altered states entered unintentionally by the mentally ill. The shaman's mastery, or control, of trance is the important, distinguishing psychological criterion whether the shaman employs a possession or a journey trance state.

Initiatory Crisis

The **initiatory illness** of the novice may be considered a temporary pathological state. During this spiritual crisis the altered state experience is spontaneous, unintentional, and experienced as reality. The novice's experience is often terrifying, but also follows initiatory patterns like **dismemberment**, death, and rebirth or his or her soul being taken into the **spirit** world by the spirit **teacher** to learn to be a shaman.

It is the fact that the individual successfully resolves this temporary break with ordinary reality that makes them a shaman. If the **illness** were not successfully resolved, the individual would be considered spiritually ill in a traditional shamanic **culture**, not a shaman. It is through the resolution of this first, spontaneous crisis that the novice learns to control the trance state and masters the techniques for working in non-ordinary reality.

The psychological phenomena of the shaman's work in trance states is unique, but not pathological. This unique quality is not accurately addressed by any particular school of psychiatric or psychological thought. To understand it, we will need to raise the cultural blinders that color and confound our attempts to clearly understand shamanic traditions. If we can engage in research with a heightened awareness of our own cultural bias, perhaps the strength of a shaman's mental health and force of spirit will emerge from the confusion. See also **soul loss**.

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———. "Phenomenological Mapping: A Method for Describing and Comparing States of Consciousness." *Journal of Transpersonal Psychology* 27, no. 1 (1995): 25–56.

Psychopomp

As a psychopomp, the **shaman** transports the **souls** of the dead home, assuring that soul's safe and complete **journey** through the death process. The shaman enters an altered state in which his or her soul leaves its body to accompany the souls of the dead to the home of the **Ancestors** or the **Land of the Dead**.

Each traditional **culture** defines the death process in its own way. The specifics of a shaman's psychopomp work, i.e., when or where he or she goes, etc., is influenced by that culture's beliefs about the soul, death, and the process of dying. However, psychopomp work always involves a journey or **soul flight**, which is the necessary tool for the shaman's soul to enter the **spirit** realms where he or she can serve as a guide.

In almost all traditions the soul lingers near its former home or by its body's gravesite. For a short time after death the soul will continue to be receptive to the physical world. During this period, many tribes have traditions to guide the soul home, to the Source-of-all-life, with **prayers**, **chants**, recitations, and preparations in the physical world, like making ritual **offerings** or disbursing or destroying the deceased's possessions so that nothing remains to hold the soul to the physical plane.

Malidoma Somé, an author and West African shaman, explains that for the **Dagara** a communal expression of grief has the **power** to send the deceased to the realm of the ancestors and to heal the hurt produced in the **psyches** of the living by the death of a loved one. The communal expression provides the opportunity for grief to reach the important cathartic peak that grief must logically lead to. In this case the shaman conducts the communal **ritual** which functions as the psychopomp by containing, generating, and directing that grief to serve as an **energy** that transports the dead home.

In most cultures it is believed that ancestor **spirits** will come to meet the newly deceased and guide that soul through the completion of the death process. When the ancestors do not come or the rituals or funerary traditions are not performed, or are performed incorrectly, the soul of the deceased may get lost and wander. If this happens, souls become unable or unwilling to complete their death process unaided. At this point the shaman must be called in to act as the psychopomp.

The need for a psychopomp may also arise in **healing** rituals with the living. If a patient is plagued or possessed by a misplaced spirit of the dead, the shaman may need to escort that spirit to the Land of the Dead after freeing it from its connection to the patient. This type of healing for the dead is often necessary to complete the healing for the living.

The following are two examples of psychopomp work by Yukagirs shaman of **Siberia**. In the first case the shaman enters a **trance** to contact the spirit of the dead to confirm that she wants help. The shaman then narrates her request for help and her pleas that she is afraid to go alone for all who are gathered, before embarking on the journey to guide that soul home.

In a second example, the soul needing help has been dead for forty days, long past the appropriate time for her return home. In this case the shaman must offer a **sacrifice** of brandy, then negotiate, and ultimately trick the necessary **spirits of the dead** so that they will receive the wandering soul and allow her entry into the Land of the Dead.

The rituals and funeral customs performed after death are based on the realization that upon death the consciousness, finding itself unexpectedly disembodied, is reluctant to give up its established place in the family. It needs time to accustom itself to the new situation. During this time the deceased's soul may try to attract the souls of relatives so that it does not feel alone. The soul does not instantly realize that it no longer belongs with the living and that it is time to return home. See also **altered states of consciousness**.

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Psychotherapeutic Practices

Traditionally, one of the shaman's many roles was to guide the psychotherapeutic **healing** of their patients. In many

cultures today patients are crossing the boundaries between the shamanic systems of indigenous peoples, holistic systems, and the scientific system of Western cultures. For example, on most reservations in **North America**, the Native American population uses the best of both traditional and Western systems, thus creating a need for transcultural medical procedures.

This self-selection process is particularly pronounced in the area of psychotherapy, where the origins of mental **illness** are largely supernatural and social from the point of view of traditional healing systems. In North America, for example, the indigenous population exhibits greater confidence in traditional **medicine** people and **shamans** than in alien psychotherapists.

The indigenous practitioner anchors his or her practice in the spirit world, a world the indigenous person knows from daily experience to be the most powerful force, interrelating all aspects of life. The psychiatrist, on the other hand, anchors his or her practice in a system of beliefs and references drawn from a foreign culture whose limited belief in the spirit world renders the psychiatric system significantly less creditable for the indigenous person.

Tribal cultures see **soul loss**, power loss, **spirit intrusion**, and **possession**, all shamanic diagnoses considered mental illness by Western medicine, as problems involving the whole social network, the individual's place within it, and within the spiritual forces of the **Kosmos**. The shaman's traditional treatment is simultaneously spiritual and psychological. For example, by removing the **spirit** or inanimate object that has intruded into the patient's body a Washo shaman is capable of curing a range of psychoneurotic disorders or disorders with psychosomatic components.

In some areas of medicine contemporary methods closely parallel shamanic methods: use of medicinal herbs, **dream** interpretation, behavior

therapy, family therapy, hypnotherapy, and psychodrama. In the area of psychotherapy in particular, the similarities can outweigh the differences.

However, the essential difference lies in the value placed on the spiritual dimension of a person, of his or her **disease**, and of the cure. The shaman, who places the health of the individual spirit foremost, will engage in **soul retrievals**, **psychopomp** work (escorting the **soul** of the dead on the **journey** to the other world), spirit integration, communication with **spirits**, **extractions** of spirit intrusions, and **cleansings**.

The shaman is also concerned with the health of the communal spirit and the individual's relationship to the community and to the Kosmos. For this the shaman designs **rituals** and ceremonies to reconnect the individual to the community and the **earth**, to cleanse the community after violation of **taboos**, and facilitate the individual and communal awareness of spirit, life purpose, service, and harmony with Nature.

Shamanic healing rituals simultaneously address the healing of complex psychological-emotional-spiritual crises on multiple levels. Rituals do not untie these intricate, painful knots as conventional therapy and analysis seek to do. The shaman cuts through the source of the crisis with ritual and the guiding hand of spirit. See also **ceremony** and **transcultural medicine**.

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Psychotropic Plants

Psychotropic plants contain naturally occurring chemicals that act on the brain, changing the way the brain and possibly the mind functions. These plants are also referred to as **plant hallucinogens** and **plant entheogens**. When prepared and ingested properly psychotropic plants convey humans into temporary **altered states of consciousness**, which for some individuals are ecstatic.

Some of the earliest forms of **shamanism**, dating back to the Paleolithic Age, may have involved the use of these plants. While this use of psychotropic plants to enter **shamanic altered states of consciousness** was and is common in shamanism, what a trained **shaman** can do under the influence of the **sacred** plant preparations is not common. To “see” accurately while in an altered state and to act with what one “sees” in that altered state requires hard work, lengthy **training**, personal sacrifice, and, most important, a special kind of psychological predisposition. See also **plant medicines**.

Puile

Puile is the Chinantec and **Mazatec** name for the **plant hallucinogen** made from the seeds of **Morning Glory**, *Ipomoea violacea*, for use in **divination** and shamanic **rituals**.

Purification

To cleanse the body, mind, and/or **spirit** of contaminating substances, thoughts, or energies that are harmful, disruptive to the acquisition of **power**, or that prevent a person from establishing a relationship and communication with spirit or power. **Space** and objects, like **ritual space** and **power objects**, can also be purified or cleansed. The appropriate purification rite depends on what is being purified and why.

Purification rites range from the simple acts for cleaning to the complex rituals usually performed for **healing**. Acts of purification include: smudging with a burning piece of sage, cedar, copal, **tobacco**, or some other plant, a spoken formula, **singing** a **sacred** song, *camaying* with alcohol or flower **water**, taking an emetic, participation in a **sweat lodge** ceremony, abstaining from sexual intercourse, fasting, dietary restrictions, and participation in ten-day-long rituals designed specifically for purification. See also **camay**; **ceremony**; **cleansing**.

Lyon, William S. *Encyclopedia of Native American Shamanism: Sacred Ceremonies of North America*. Santa Barbara, CA: ABC-CLIO, 1998.



Qanimasog

Qanimasog, meaning “one who shivers with fever,” is the West Greenland **Eskimo** term for sorcerer. A sorcerer who only casts **spells** is called a *serrasog*, or witch. See also **Greenland** and **sorcery**.

Lyon, William S. *Encyclopedia of Native American Shamanism: Sacred Ceremonies of North America*. Santa Barbara, CA: ABC-CLIO, 1998.

QaumanEq

QaumanEq is the special ability of the Iglulik **angakok** (**Eskimo** shaman) to see what others cannot see, to “seeing with **spirit** eyes.” *QaumanEq* is the ability to see in the darkness, both literally and metaphorically. An *angakok* with *QaumanEq* is filled with a light or **energy**. This enlightenment enables the *angakok* to perceive energies, people, and events, in the past, present, and future.

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Q'ero

The Q'eros—or “long hairs”—are a **Quechua**-speaking people who live clustered in five small villages, located at approximately 17,000 feet up the mist-enshrouded Andes of south-central Peru. Living in the high altitude and rugged terrain, the Q'ero have remained in monastic isolation for over 500 years, protecting the unchanged cultural and spiritual traditions of the Q'ero. The

Q'ero were essentially unknown to the Western world until 1949.

Q'ero was first a place, the home of the first man and woman, Inkari and Collari, created by Kamaq. Inkari and Collari eventually move, have children, and send their first-born son back to Q'ero to live. Later they visit Q'ero and designate its people the keepers of their spiritual traditions, those of the **Inka**.

It is unclear whether or not the Inka are the descendants of the Inkari and Collari and the original Q'ero people. It is clear that today's Q'ero are the direct descendants of the Inka and that Inka **shamanism** continues to be practiced in an unbroken tradition by the Q'ero people. Long ago their **ancestors**, a small group of ancient Inkas, climbed high up into the mountains. There they created a very isolated sanctuary for the safekeeping of the ancient prophecies and traditions they believe hold key teachings that will be important for the survival and **evolution** of the world.

The Q'eros refer to this time, the end of the 20th century, as *take onkoy*, the gestation of the luminous body of the world. The Q'ero are determined to share their traditions and practices with the rest of the world to reunite the great spiritual traditions of North and South (hemispheres) and gather together the peoples of the Four Directions. From this coalition can come the essential transmission of spiritual **power** needed for *take onkoy* to become a reality.

Wirachocha and Ayni

Wirachocha is the supreme creative **energy** that brought forth the universe, through which divine will and divine thought were transmitted to humans. When humans use their divine will and divine thought in every moment they can live life as an expression of *Wirachocha*, the superior energy that flows through the universe. In that humans become capable of transforming themselves into *Illapa Runas*, Beings of Light. This is the desired state of consciousness and the path to it

results in a way of life in harmony with others, the planet, and the cosmos.

The **knowledge** of this path is called *Pachacutec*, the return to Divine Origin, *Wirachocha*. Q'ero **shamans** see life and the universe in these cosmic terms. For example, the **soul** is seen as a subtle, cosmic energy that exists in humans. When a child is born, this energy, called the *ánimu*, enters from the top of the head and warms the child's **blood**, giving it life. At death, the *ánimu* leaves through the top of the head and melds again with the cosmic weaving of *Wirachocha*.

Any human who attains a high state of consciousness can learn to vibrate his or her own energy at a frequency that is in harmony and balance with all things. That frequency of harmony and balance can be transmitted to everyone and everything around, including the *Pachamama* (**earth**). The actions of this individual become **sacred**; they are in *ayni* (perfect reciprocity). Achieving this state an individual can merge with all-that-is, love, and life the energy of the Universe.

Q'ero Realities

The Q'ero explain that there are two realities: *panya* and *yoqe*. *Panya* is all that we associate with the world; it is **ordinary reality**. *Yoqe* is all that we associate with the spirit world; it is **non-ordinary reality**. Through *yoqe* the shaman connects with the enigma, the **Great Mystery**, and the unfolding of unknown energies that are everpresent in all things.

Pacha (the **Kosmos**) is divided into three worlds. *Hanaqpacha*, the **Upper-world** or superior world, is filled with superior energy that flows through the universe, called by various names: *texemuyo*, *wira-cocha*, *paha kamak*. *Ukhu-pacha*, the **Lowerworld** or interior world, is populated by invisible beings, beings who existed before the universe took its form, and elemental beings. *Kaypacha* is *Pachamama's* world or the surface world populated by all the animal, plant, and geographic beings of the earth.

The power of the *paq'o* (shaman) comes from his or her ability to communicate with the *achachle*, the **spirit** that lives in everything. The *paq'o* must cultivate his or her personal power/energy to able to link with different powers/energies in the environment to attain this state of sacred communication. At the core of this practice is the *paq'o's mesa*, an altar-like arrangement of *q'uyas* (stone's **power objects**) and the *icaros* (sacred **songs**).

The Q'ero Spirit World

Primary in the spirit world of the Q'ero is *Pachamama*, the earth, and the *apus*, the **spirits** of the mountains. *Pachamama* is the expression of the female cosmic energy and is associated with the blood, birth, and death. The *apus*, are the expression of the male cosmic energy and are receivers of celestial powers.

The *paq'o* also communicates with the spirits of nature, for example, *kuichi* (the rainbow), *malqu* (**trees**), *mayo* (river), *kocha* (sacred lakes) and the four **elements**: *allypa* (earth), *unu* (**water**), *wayra* (winds), *nina* (**fire**). Entering into the sacred relationship of *ayni* with the spirits of Nature promotes well-being of self and others.

Paq'o—The Shamans

The *paq'o* of the Andes are spiritual leaders who serve an area or region. They are organized into a system of concentric **circles** of power. In the center with the smallest circle of power is a *paq'o* who serves a small village, then the *paq'o* who serves a larger village, and finally the *paq'o* who encompasses the larger circles of power serves a region, and so on.

Every living being in the universe has a relationship of service to other beings. The **training** of a *paq'o* begins by serving a very small mountain from his or her area. When that energy is mastered he or she moves on to a larger mountain in the area. Finally he or she begins working with the spirit of a region. At each stage of development

the power of the *paq'o* increases commensurate with the power of the mountain or region that they serve. The *paq'o* is always learning, training, and receiving **karpay** (**initiation**) from beings of greater and greater power throughout his or her lifetime.

Selection

There are entryways, formal and informal, to become a *paq'o* in the Q'ero tradition. The traditional path is followed in a formal way, receiving teachings and the corresponding energy transmissions from a master. There are also informal paths, for example being struck by lightning and surviving. In this case the transmission can come from the lightning and training must follow. The transmission can also come from the spirit world, manifesting as a feeling inside the individual that he or she has been called to become a *paq'o*. All paths are strange and difficult and traverse a lifetime.

Karpay

Karpay is "to be initiated" and always involves a transmission of knowledge and energy. In this sense initiation is not a measure of spiritual success, like a graduation, but a creation of potential, like the planting of an Inka seed in one's soul. Anyone can receive the *karpay* rites. The *paq'o* is distinguished by what he or she is able to do with the energy and knowledge transmitted.

Karpays are the rites of passage of the *kurak akulleq*, one of the highest level of *paq'o* in the Inka traditions. They contain the mystery teachings that can not be told, but can be known. For those who can "see" into the mystery, *karpays* convey sacred knowledge that can not be shared, but can be experienced.

Teachings and Teachers

There are particular lines of knowledge and levels of development for which it is helpful for the *paq'o* to have a **teacher** or **mesayoq** (master). For example, one of the fundamental skills of the *paq'o* is to see fields of energy. The *mesayoq* can

awaken that sight and teach the *paq'o* to use it to read connections within the fields of action and to interact with those fields.

The *mesayoq* teaches the use of **Coca** leaves for **offerings** and for **divinations** and techniques to reconnect with the matrix of the Kosmos. The *mesayoq* teaches the meditative techniques to connect with the *achachle* that lives in all things like meditating on the lap of *Pachamama* to draw in strength from earth or to working with *Pachakamac*, the **Sun**, to draw in that concentrated energy.

Awakening the Luminous Body

Another fundamental skill the *paq'o* must learn is the cultivation of the luminous body, or *kausay poq'po* (energy bubble). The *kausay poq'po* is the energy field that surrounds the body; the center is the *qosqo*, located around the belly area. The luminous body must be awakened, cleared, and healed so that it can grow and transform as the *paq'o* does.

The Q'ero perceive of all energy as neutral, not negative/positive or good/evil. The *paq'o* must learn to discern between qualities of energy: *hoocha* (heavy) or *sami* (refined). The *qosqo* is used to move the energy. Heavy energy must be transmuted and is fed to *Pachamama*. Refined energy is drawn from nature or *hanaqpacha*, the Upperworld and redirected where it is needed. *Sami* can be directed into a person, a community, or into the natural environment to correct energy imbalances and blocks so that energies can return to a harmonious flow.

Initiation

There are many levels of initiation for the *paq'o*. Each initiation lasts from fifteen days to a month and involves walking through the high mountains and going to sacred sites to experience teachings. Initiates participate in many **rituals** designed to connect them to resident spirits and to receive transmissions. They also experience the energies

directly, for example meditating on the cosmos under the night **sky** or bathing in very cold mountain lagoons.

The initiates are tested in many ways, all of them hard and not all of them apparent. There are tests of fire, knowledge, and love. There are tests to determine their physical readiness, the preparation of their hearts, and their ability to be compassionate.

Levels of Training

When the *paq'o* has mastered the fundamentals of energy and working with the local *apus*, the next level of training is to learn to use *q'uyas* (stone's) for **healing** and therapy. There are many different *q'uyas* and many different applications. For example, healing energy can be transmitted through a *q'uya* or the *q'uya* can be used to cleanse heavy energies from the body. The *paq'o* learns mystical techniques to give the *q'uyas* a purpose and meaning that allow it to be used in the healing.

Certain rocks are distinguished as *q'uya* because they have a particular feeling to the *paq'o*. The most powerful rocks are found high in the Andes and the *paq'o* may be guided to them in **dreams** or **visions**. *Q'uyas* can be stones struck by lightning or stones given by a river, a lake, or *Pachamama*. Some large *q'uyas* are stone **altars** used at sacred sites where the *paq'o* engage and direct the forces of Nature.

The next level of *paq'o* is the *kuya hampeqs*, the herbalist healer who has mastered the art of working with plant powers for healing. The *kuya hampeq* is the physician of the Andes who is an expert on the use of plant energies and **plant spirits** to cure **illness**.

All of the next three levels of *paq'o* are capable of extraordinary healings, both physical—like paralysis and drug addiction—and spiritual—like psychic and psychological abnormalities. In addition to healings the *pampa mesayoq*, the *alto mesayoq*, and *kuraq akullec* each use their relationship with the supernatural in unique and increasingly more powerful and enlightened ways.

The *pampa mesayoq* is an expert healer and is perhaps the shaman of the *paq'o* as the role is defined in this volume. His or her main relationship is serving *Pachamama* and using rituals to direct and maintain Her energies. The *pampa mesayoq* works with medicinal plants, performs divinations with *Coca* leaves, creates and uses **talismans**, and works with animals, plants, trees, rivers, and other aspects of the geography of the earth.

The *alto mesayoq*, of which there are three levels, specializes in the cultivation of his or her relationship with the *apu*, the spirits of the mountains. The *karpa* of the *alto mesayoq* involves the consecration of his or her being to the service of the mountain. As a consequence it is the *alto mesayoq* who listens to and speaks directly with the *apu*, who is the only being who knows the whole prophecy of **Pachakuti**. Each *alto mesayoq* is also consecrated into the service of a star, which, with the *apu*, serves *alto mesayoq's* guide.

The *kuraq akullec*, which means the great elder or master, is one of the highest levels. There are very few who master it. There are two levels of *kuraq* above this; both are even more rare and cannot be named. The *kuraq akullec* is a great visionary who works primarily with the superior energies of *hanaq-pacha* and the celestial filaments. It is a very prophetic and charismatic role.

The *kuraq akullec* can be a man or a woman. The male *kuraq akullec* is more visible to the outside world; however, it is usually the female *kuraq akullec* who moves the celestial filaments. Working with these celestial energies can bring about miraculous long-distance healings. The *kuraq akullec* are also known to use earthquakes and other energies of Nature to create transformation.

Tools

The primary tool of the Q'ero shaman is the cultivation of his or her own **energy body** to use as a tool to direct the energies of the physical and spiritual environment. Within that practice the *paq'o*

does use actual tools that aid in communion with the elemental spirits of nature and the frequencies of celestial energy.

The Mesa, K'uyas, and Icaros

The *paq'o's mesa* is a bundle of **power objects** that function's as a portable altar and is used in small personal and large group rituals. For use, the *mesa* is unwrapped and its contents placed ritually on the cloth. Typical contents include stone's and objects that embody the power of *Pachamama*, the *apus*, and the *paq'o's* teachers, both human and/or spirit beings.

Q'uyas are stone power objects. They can be large enough to serve as altars at a sacred site and small enough to be folded into the *paq'o's mesa*. *Icaros* are sacred songs taught to the *paq'o* by the spirits or by his or her teacher who receives the song ultimately from the spirits. **Singing** the *icaros* is a way to call on the energy of the spirit who gave the song and receive and/or direct that energy.

Despacho and Kint'u (Coca)

A *despacho* **ceremony** is a traditional Andean offering to *Pachamama*. Performing the *despacho* is part of nearly every Q'ero ceremony. It is the formal way to give thanks to and to honor the energies of *Pachamama*, the *apus*, and Nature.

The *kint'u* is an offering of *Coca* leaves that can be used in different ways during the *despacho*. The *k'intu*, made of three *Coca* leaves, is a formal way of sharing *Coca* which is a sacred act of spiritual and energetic bonding.

Rattle, Whistle, and Pisco

The **rattle** and whistle are used to call on the spirits of Nature and to establish a sacred relationship with them to use during a sacred ceremony. *Pisco*, strong Peruvian alcohol made from the skin and seed of grapes, is used for **cleansing**.

Coca

Coca is the most sacred plant of the Andes. "To chew *Coca*" means to

meditate. One of the highest levels of *paq'o* is called the *kuraq akulleg*, which means "the great chewer of *Coca* leaves," or great master. *Coca* leaves are used for divination, as offerings, and as **vehicles** to carry **prayers** and *ayni*, perfect reciprocity, in ceremony.

Coca leaves are used for divination to determine a person's destiny and to **diagnose** illnesses. The leaves are held to the mouth and prayed into or asked the questions, then allowed to fall onto the *manta*, or ceremonial cloth. The leaves, their shape, coloration, dispersion, and relative relationships, are all read. There is an entire system of symbols associated with reading *Coca* leaves; however, to read the leaves well, the *paq'o* must cultivate *Coca q'awaq*, **clairvoyant** abilities.

During the *despacho* a participant receives a *k'intu* made from three *Coca* leaves from the *paq'o*. The *k'intu* is held to the mouth and prayed into, blown into, and then slowly chewed and tucked into the cheek. The *k'intu* is not always chewed. It can be used as a vehicle for *ayni* during the *despacho*. The prayers, breath, and energy sent into the *k'intu* are given in reciprocity for the help and guidance received from the **nature spirits**. Charged in this way the *k'intu* are returned to the *paq'o* who incorporates them into the *despacho*.

Pachakuti—the Time of Transformation

According to ancient Inka prophecy the end of the 20th century is the time of gathering and reintegration of the Peoples of the earth. It is a time of upheaval and great change that will make it fertile for a new seed of awareness and being to mature into profound alterations in the way humanity perceives the core structures of the universe.

The Q'ero recognize that there are three types of human intelligence/power: *yachay* (knowledge) developed in the Europeans, *munay* (love and feeling) developed in the indigenous South Americans, and

llankay (the ability to manifest) developed in the North Americans. Each of these peoples needs the intelligence and power of the other two to be whole. This time of change, *Pachakuti*, will create the potential for Wholeness by bringing all three powers together.

Pachakuti is a very important moment for all humanity, particularly those who have strayed from a balanced life of purpose and meaning. *Pachakuti* is a time to realign the world in renewed order and harmony and to open to new ways of seeing the world. To this end the Q'ero now open their teachings to all others in preparation for the day the Eagle of the North and the Condor of the South fly together again. See also **Andes, South America**, and **South America**.

Bennett, H. Z. "From the Heart of the Andes: An Interview with Q'ero Shaman Americo Yabar." *Shaman's Drum* 36 (Fall 1994): 40–49.

Villoldo, Alberto, and Erik Jendresen. *The Four Winds: A Shaman's Odyssey into the Amazon*. San Francisco: Harper & Row, 1990.

Wilcox, J. P., and E. B. Jenkins. "Journey to Q'ollorit'i: Initiation into Andean Mysticism." *Shaman's Drum* 40 (Winter 1996): 34–49.

Qilaain

(Dialectical variants: *qilaun*, *qilaut*, and *qitlaun*.) The *qilaain* is the **drum** of the East Greenland **Eskimo** *angakok* (**shaman**). It is the only instrument used by the *angakok* and is fundamental to the process of inducing trance.

The *qilaain* is made from a wooden hoop, approximately 18 inches in diameter, over which is stretched a piece of skin, preferably the skin of the stomach of a polar bear. A handle or *kattiilua* (also *kalilua*) is lashed to the wooden rim of the drum. The *angakok* may choose to add an **amulet** to the *qilaain* to improve the **power** of his or her **singing**, e.g., the stiff **feathers** from the root of the beak of the raven are inserted

under the lashings, or *kilikirpia*, for this purpose.

The *qilaain* is played by striking the lower border of the wooden hoop, not the drumhead, with the *kättiwa*, or drumstick. During the *torniwoq*, the shamanic **rituals**, the *qilaain* is usually played by the assistant, freeing the *angakok* to **dance** about, call his or her **spirits** for help, and enter trance. The *angakok* calls his or her **helping spirits** with the *anaalutaa*, a simple wooden stick that is tapped on the floor to call in spirits and to send others away. See also **Greenland** and *torngraq*.

Lyon, William S. *Encyclopedia of Native American Shamanism: Sacred Ceremonies of North America*. Santa Barbara, CA: ABC-CLIO, 1998.

Qilajoq

One who consults the **spirits** in the *qilaneq* divination **ceremony**. The practitioner is not necessarily a **shaman**, but someone who has acquired a *qila*, or "**spirit** of the **earth**," as a **helping spirit** and is empowered by the *qila* to perform the **divination**. Variations of this ceremony are found throughout the Arctic region in Eskimo **cultures**. Plural: *qilajut*, also called a *qilalik*. See also **Eskimo**.

Lyon, William S. *Encyclopedia of Native American Shamanism: Sacred Ceremonies of North America*. Santa Barbara, CA: ABC-CLIO, 1998.

Qilaneq

The most common **divination** ceremony in the Arctic region, performed in many variations in different Eskimo **cultures**. In this **ceremony** the *qilajoq* lays the patient, or a relative of the patient, on the floor facing up and fastens a belt around the head or foot. The patient relaxes on the floor and the *qilajoq* begins to ask his or her *qila*, **helping spirits**, questions, for example, to diagnose the patient's **illness**.

When the question is asked the practitioner calls on the **spirit**, raising the belt and body part to which it is fastened. If the body part grows too heavy to raise, the **spirits** are present and they have answered “yes.” If the body part maintains its normal weight and is easily lifted the spirits have answered “no.” See also **Eskimo**.

Lyon, William S. *Encyclopedia of Native American Healing*. New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 1996.

———. *Encyclopedia of Native American Shamanism: Sacred Ceremonies of North America*. Santa Barbara, CA: ABC-CLIO, 1998.

Qologogoloq

The *qologogoloq* is a **charm**, created and used by **tungralik**, whose **power** is inherent. It is carved from wood and can be an animal figure, an object, or a **mask**. The *qologogoloq* is used and reused in a variety of ceremonial ways. See also **Alaskan** and **Eskimo**.

Lyon, William S. *Encyclopedia of Native American Shamanism: Sacred Ceremonies of North America*. Santa Barbara, CA: ABC-CLIO, 1998.

Qoobakiyaxale

(Also *koobakiyalhale*.) The *qoobakiyaxale* is the outfit doctor or singing doctor of the Pomo people of coastal California in North America. Singing doctors were skilled at extracting poisons from a victim's body. (The literal translation of *qoobakiyaxale* is “performer for somebody poisoned.”) Generally, it was thought that a **qoogauk** (sorcerer) introduced the poisons to the victim. A variety of poisons were known: plants, herbs, **mushrooms**, rattlesnake juice in water, pinole poison from lizards and snakes, touch with a coyote paw, **oak** blossoms mixed with ground human bones, and snake blood. These poisons could affect someone by being put on their clothing or hair, on money or

beads, or in food or drink. The Pomo believed that only the singing doctor had the skill and the **power** to extract the poisons. Because of this, he was a man to be respected.

The *qoobakiyaxale* is one of two types of Pomo shamans. The second type, the **madu**, were known as dream doctors or sucking doctors. They gained their power from spontaneous **mystical experiences**. The power of the *qoobakiyaxale*, on the other hand, was supposed to have started with creation and was passed down to him through the hereditary transfer of **songs**, the objects in his outfit, and the **knowledge** of how to use them.

The *qoobakiyaxale* began **training** in early childhood, learning the proper **sacred** songs, locations of various herbs, and their preparation. As the apprentice matured, many more years were devoted to the serious study of the profession, some doctors learning well over 1,000 different songs. When the apprentice was proficient and the mentor prepared to retire, the outfit was passed down to the apprentice. This outfit was the source of the *qoobakiyaxale*'s power.

The power objects of the outfit were kept in a sack made from the whole skin of a deer, which was usually stored in a special little house, out of the reach of those who lacked the knowledge of how to use the powerful objects held within. A typical *qoobakiyaxale* outfit included:

1. The cocoon **rattle**. The *qoobakiyaxale* always shook the cocoon rattle to keep time as he sang. Some Pomo also called the *qoobakiyaxale* the “rattle doctor.”
2. A three- to four-inch obsidian or flint blade that was rubbed with herbs determined by the nature of the **illness**, heated, and pressed into the painful body part while the doctor sang continuously.
3. Rocks taken from mineral springs, which were heated, rubbed with herbs, and used much like the blade.

4. Two or three head nets.
5. A hat with many kinds of feathers, e.g., owl, woodpecker, raven, yellow hawk, emerald **bird**. The feathers were worn and also used as healing tools.
6. A sharpened stick, usually of manzanita wood, used to pin the **feather** hats to the head net.
7. A breechcloth of braided laurel.
8. A stone pestle, usually about six inches long, used with the mortar to grind up paints or medicinal herbs.
9. A hollowed out stone, used both as a mortar and bowl. The patient was fed herbs and **medicines** directly from it.
10. Additional items, e.g., various herbs, seeds, roots, greases, paints for ritual attire, eggs of the turtle not yet laid, coyote paw, bulbs of a kind of wild onion, seeds of a small red pine, pine sugar, rattlesnake and bull snake heads, a liquid-filled moleskin, fragments from the hill of a certain ant, powdered whalebone, and the cremated bone of a person killed in violence.

Four days is typical for the *qoobakiyalxale's* **healing** ceremonies, which were most often conducted in the patient's home. The family of the patient erected a pole and placed the payment around it, the amount varying depending on the seriousness of the cure. This payment—which traditionally consisted of beads and sometimes baskets, blankets, or food—remained untouched until the healing was completed. The doctor returned the beads if the patient later died from the illness he was supposed to heal.

The singing doctor usually had an assistant, whose main purpose was to use small sticks to count off the number of songs. (The doctor had to sing all healing songs four times before moving on to the next one.) After a few songs, the doctor sang a sack-opening song, and with it named every object in his sack, taking each out and spreading it

on the bare ground by a fire. The Pomo believed that if the doctor sang the songs incorrectly, he could fall ill, or even die.

The most common illnesses required the application of various herbal mixtures either by rubbing the preparation into the patient's skin with a heated blade or stick or inserting the mixture into a small incision in the skin. When finished, the *qoobakiyalxale* left his outfit with the patient to continue the healing, returning several days later to check on the patient's progress. The *qoobakiyalxale* either retrieved his outfit and payment or continued his treatment. If the patient failed to recover after several visits, the doctor reassessed his **diagnosis**. For the duration of healing ceremonies, the *qoobakiyalxale* was forbidden from eating meat and grease, and from drinking water.

Qoobakiyalxale were called upon to treat any type of illness, in addition to those caused by **sorcery**. He could, for instance, cure an illness caused by violating a restriction or taboo, or by an ordinary cause.

Lyon, William S. *Encyclopedia of Native American Shamanism: Sacred Ceremonies of North America*. Santa Barbara, CA: ABC-CLIO, 1998.

Qoogauk

The Pomo term for a sorcerer or witch, rare among the Pomo. The *qoogauk* is one who sends poisons or **pains** that the **shaman** must extract. See also **sorcery**.

Lyon, William S. *Encyclopedia of Native American Shamanism: Sacred Ceremonies of North America*. Santa Barbara, CA: ABC-CLIO, 1998.

Quechua

Quechua is both a people and a **language**. The language is the language of the **Inka** empire that spread north and south from Cuzco, Peru, in the 15th and 16th centuries following Inkan

conquest. Quechua continued to spread into Ecuador without conquest and into the tropical rain forest of both Ecuador and Peru. Today there are many Quechua-speaking peoples spread north and south along the Andes of Ecuador and Peru and into the Oriente of both countries.

Cosmology

Thousands of years ago, *Viracocha*, the creator of all things, created men and women. They lived wild in **caves** with the other animals. *Inti*, the **Sun**, looked down and took pity on the humans. *Inti* sent *Manco Capac*, his son, and *Mama Ocllo*, his daughter-in-law, to teach the humans how to build villages, grow crops, and build society. To this end, humans were taught laws to live by.

Above all other laws was the directive to never build more or grow more than was needed and to act always as guardians of all things on *Pachamama*, the **earth**. *Manco Capac* and *Mama Ocllo* taught the humans to live in a way that was responsible for and conscious of the fact that they were connected to all things—all the plants, animals, mountains, stone's and to *Pachamama* herself. These laws were passed on to generation after generation of Quechua, who see themselves today as protectors and caretakers of the earth.

Like the **Q'ero**, the Quechua speak of **Pachakuti**, a time of great change at the end of the 20th century. It is the time envisioned in **dreams** of the **ancestors** of the Quechua who saw the Eagle of **North America** and the Condor of **South America** flying in the same **sky**. To this end the Quechua offer the secret teaching of the Condor and the heart to their brothers and sister in the land of the Eagle.

Canelos Quechua

The Canelos Quechua are a people of the Ecuadorian Oriente. They refer to themselves as *Sacha Runa*, "human of the rain forest." The **shamans** of the Canelos tribe are renowned for producing the most powerful, and therefore the most valued, **tsentsaks**. Shamans

from many different tribes travel for days to receive these powerful **magical darts** and to train with these shamans, or **yachajs**.

The strong *yachaj* has mastered over time **training** and discipline and a level of personal control that allows him to balance his **knowledge** with his **visions**, both ordinary visions of the future and those shown to him by the **spirits** while under the influence of **ayahuasca**. He is able to accurately relate his visions to cultural knowledge and to relate his personal insights and reflections to both the knowledge and the visions.

The *yachaj* is engaged in a continuous process of cultivating self awareness and *yachana*, "to know, to learn." The first step is to control within himself the process of reflection and creative endeavor, or *yuyana* (*yuyarina*), "to think, to reflect." Growth in the *yachaj*'s consciousness is seen in his ability to creatively maintain a dynamic balance between his visions, *muscuna*, "to dream, to see," and his knowledge of things outside of himself, *ricsina*, "to know, to experience, to perceive, to comprehend."

Men and women who control this process within themselves are able to use the foundation of their cultural knowledge, their laws, to relate experience and vision to other systems of knowledge. They move up in status to paradigm builders and creators of change. They become masters of their profession and create the most powerful and/or valuable tools of their professions. These strong *yachaj* are able to simultaneously maintain native paradigms and expand those paradigms to create change in the world today.

For example, the *yachaj* continue to look to the traditional cosmic forces that generate strength and health and those that cause weakness and **illness**. As a result they are the best diagnosticians in the area. From this insight they recognize that **diseases** new to the indigenous people (tuberculosis, diphtheria, whooping cough, and influenza) and some old one's (malaria, measles,

chicken pox) are caused by forces beyond the traditional. So, logically and rationally, **healing** powers beyond these shamans must be used. The *yachaj* tend to be strong supporter of programs that make Western techniques and **medicines** available to their people.

Otavalan Quechua

The Otavalan Quechua live high in the Andes where their shamans call on *Pachamama* and the energies of the mountains, like *Grandmother Cotacachi* and *Grandfather Imbabura* to assist them in their healing sessions.

To **camay**, to forcefully blow the unity of all things into someone or something, is central to Quechua healing. The technique is used ubiquitously to bring anything, but particularly humans, back into balance with the unity of all things. This practice is derived from the Quechua awareness that all are one, and to fall out of balance with that unity in any way is the fundamental source of all illness.

To **camay** the breath of life is fundamental. The shaman also **camays** with different substances to cleanse, empower, or sift the **energy** of a person or part of a person. Traditional substances include **trago** (cane alcohol), fragrant oil, flower water, spices (cinnamon), flower petals (carnations), and flame created by **camaying** a fine mist of **trago** across a candle flame.

In a typical healing session, the shaman's **altar** is spread with many **huacas** (stone **power objects**), a candle, fresh eggs, fruit, flower petals, spices, and **trago**. There are freshly cut branches (stinging nettles) or flowers to the side. The shaman **camays** his or her altar, spraying a **cleansing** mist across everything and begins to whistle his **power songs**.

The shaman whistles or **chants** songs to call in the **helping spirits** that help the shaman to enter **trance**. Quechua shamans move in and out of trance and between lighter and deeper trance states as are needed to perform the acts of healing necessary. Though

they do not ask for information before their **diagnosis**, they do speak to the patient during the healing to convey necessary information.

The process of diagnosis is unique to each shaman. For example, some use a candle rubbed all over the patient's body and burned, while others use a special *huaca* or simply enter into trance.

Patients disrobe for the healings, and the shaman proceeds using a variety of techniques dictated by the diagnosis. The shaman **camays trago**, very often through the flame of a candle, engulfing the patient in a ball of **fire**. Flames are **camayed** onto branches of stinging nettles and shaken vigorously against the bare body.

The shaman continues selecting specific **huacas** to massage the patient with and draw out harmful energies. Eggs are used in a similar fashion. The shaman rubs eggs all over the body to collect harmful energies or places them against the part of the body affected and sucks the energies out through the eggs. These eggs are quickly broken on the earth or into a clay pot and offered to the spirits outside of the healing **space**. The shaman brushes and shakes leaf bunches all over the body to cleanse it. At the completion of the healing, herbs may be prescribed to be taken internally or in the bath to support the body's adjustment to the shaman's healing.

When the shaman diagnoses **espan-tu**, a sudden fear or trauma, **soul loss** is expected. The shaman will enter the spirit world, retrieve the lost **soul**, and returns it to the patient. See also **Andes, South America**.

Perkins, J. *The World Is as You Dream It*. Rochester, VT: Destiny Books, 1994.
Whitten, Dorothea S., and Norman E. Whitten, Jr. *Art, Knowledge and Health: Development and Assessment of a Collaborative, Auto-Financed Organization in Eastern Ecuador*. Cambridge, MA: Cultural Survival, Inc., 1985.

Quetho

The *berdache* (*berdach*) of the Tewa Pueblo people of the North American southwest. A *quetho* (pronounced, *kwihdoh*) is identified as a child who has a special relationship with the spirit world. They are inclined to be androgynous and gentle, resisting socialization into male or female **gender** roles. As they mature *quetho* are not assigned a male or female sex by the elders. See also **gender variant**.

Williams, W. L. *The Spirit and the Flesh*. Boston: Beacon Press, 1992.

Q'uya

Q'uyas are stone **power objects** used in the shamanic practices of **Q'ero**

shamans. They can be large enough to serve as an **altar** at **sacred** sites or small enough to be folded into the shaman's *mesa*. There are many different *q'uyas* and many different applications for **healing** and therapy. For example, healing **energy** can be transmitted through a *q'uya* or the *q'uya* can be used to cleanse heavy energies from the body.

Certain rocks are distinguished as *q'uya* because they have a particular feeling to the **shaman**. The most powerful rocks are found high in the Andes and the *paq'o* may be guided to them in **dreams** or **visions**. *Q'uyas* can be stone's struck by lightning or stone's given by a river, a lake, or *Pachamama*, the **earth**. See also **Andes, South America**.

R

Rai

Spirit beings in **Aboriginal** Australia. *Rai* are **spirits of the dead**, pre-existent spirit children, and **spirits** who will be reincarnated. *Rai* can act as **helping spirits** for the **shaman** and/or as initiating spirits. *Rai* are distinct from the hereditary helping spirit received from family or clan during **initiation** into adulthood.

In the southwest, Kimberley Division, shamans are initiated by the *rai*. The *rai* cuts the initiate open, removes the internal organs, and hangs them up. The empty torso is filled with magic cooking stones, covered in paper bark, and put over a hot earth-oven. When done, the *rai* replaces the organs, leaving the magic stones inside, and closes the initiate up.

The *rai* then takes the initiate and dips him in a **sacred** water place and inserts more magic stones through his navel and temple, giving the initiate "an inner eye of magic" that allows him to see what is normally invisible. The *rai* also teaches him to use his magical cord to travel to the realms of the **dreamtime**. See also **Australia** and **water**.

Elkin, A. P. *Aboriginal Men of High Degree*. New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 1994.

Kalweit, Holger. *Dreamtime and Inner Space: The World of the Shaman*. Boston: Shambhala Publications, 1988.

Rainbow Serpent

In **Australia**, the **Aboriginals** tell of a Rainbow Serpent being who brought great **blessings** to humanity. *Ungud*, the

Rainbow Serpent, is simultaneously male and female and is the **soul** of all beings who can act creatively. *Ungud* cooperated with the Milky Way to create the world and humankind. It is the huge snake living in the **earth** at the beginning of time and the rainbow across the **sky** today.

The Rainbow Serpent at its most basic symbolizes the spiraling cosmic **power** that is the creative force from which emerged our world and humankind on that world. It is an extension of universal serpent **myths** that permeate the beliefs of all peoples, past and present. These mythical serpent creatures are recorded in many countries: the dragons of **China**, the *naga* of India, the *taniwah* of New Zealand, the **water** serpents of the **San**, and in the myths of Europe, ancient Greece, Egypt, and the Indonesian and Melanesian islands.

Belief in the Rainbow Serpent is universal among Aborigines and strongly associated with the **shaman** throughout Australia. In some tribes the Rainbow Serpent takes the shaman to a place under the waterhole for several days to teach him **songs** and **dances** for the tribal **healing** rituals. The **crystals** inserted into the shaman's body during his **initiation**, the source of the shaman's power, are found where the rainbow touches the earth.

The Rainbow Serpent is simultaneously the mythical being living in the spirit world and the water dwelling snakes that live in the natural world. These ordinary manifestations are known throughout Australia by many names, including *bunyip*, *akaru*, *takkan*, *wogal*, and *brimures*. The serpent is associated with the **sound** of the **bullroarer** and the shaman's ability to call the rain.

The Rainbow Serpent is the initiating spirit in some Aboriginal tribes, transforming boys into men and men into shamans. In puberty rites, the Rainbow Snake takes the boy from the women, swallows and regurgitates him, releasing the initiate into the **circle** of

men. In some tribes the Rainbow Serpent is replaced in the male puberty rites with *Ingurug*, the Old Woman or All-Mother.

In the initiation of shamans a master shaman takes the initiate into the **Upperworld**, seated astride the Rainbow Serpent. There in the Sky small rainbow serpents and quartz crystals are inserted into the initiate's body, filling him with the Rainbow Serpent's power. After this operation the initiate is brought back to earth, again riding the Rainbow Serpent. The master shaman inserts more magical objects into his body and wakens him by touching him with a magical stone. The new shaman must now learn to control the powers inserted within.

In **Africa** there are stories of a great serpent, shooting rainbows from its body as it moves, told by people of Nigeria, Mozambique, Namibia, Natal, and many countries of West Africa. This serpent brought the earth mother to this world. In Western Africa they say the earth mother traveled through the world in the mouth of the Rainbow Serpent, creating mountains, valleys, and stars.

The Vedaps of Northern Transvaal believe that *Nyoka* the python first taught men and women how to make love, again associating the serpent with creativity and life force. Love-making is considered a **sacred** teaching and one of the greatest gifts bestowed on humankind by the Creator spirit.

Around the world shamans ride the serpent into the earth, through the **Dreamtime**, and climb the serpent's rainbow to enter the Upperworld. The Rainbow Serpent appears as the celestial anaconda who brought the first man, woman, and the *ayahuasca* to **Amazonia**. It is Quetzalcoatl, the plumed creator serpent of the Mesoamerican people. Everywhere the Rainbow Serpent is found associated with shamans, their extraordinary powers, and the essential creative force of the **Kosmos**. See also **Mesoamerica** and **ritual**.

Buchler, I., and K. Maddock. *The Rainbow Serpent*. The Hague: Mouton Publishers, 1978.

Eliade, Mircea. *Shamanism: Archaic Techniques of Ecstasy*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1964.

Rama Puran Tsan

The **First Shaman** of the Magar people of **Nepal** who appeared in the fourth age of Nepalese cosmology and fought with nine witch sisters concluding in a truce agreement. In that agreement the witches could continue to cause **illness** for humanity, but could no longer extract payment and **blood** sacrifices. In exchange, the **shamans** would be able to heal humanity of these illnesses. See also **sacrifice**.

Kalweit, Holger. *Shamans, Healers, and Medicine Men*. Boston: Shambhala Publications, 1992.

Rattles

Rattles are one of the oldest musical instruments, believed to be created originally to imitate the **sound** of rain. There are three classes of rattles. The first is any vessel filled with objects that move about, making a "rattling" noise when shaken. The rattle may or may not have a handle attached. The vessel can be round, box-shaped, highly decorated, or constructed like a small **drum**. Dried gourds and seed pods are common sources of natural rattles.

The second category consists of objects suspended so that they clash together. Rattles of this type are not always held in the hand, but are often constructed to be worn while dancing. The third category is a rasping stick or a notched stick that is scraped with a second stick common in southwestern **North America** where a basket is used as a resonator at the bottom of the notched stick. This category also includes wooden clappers common on the Pacific northwestern coast of North America.

Rattles are used by **shamans** universally in their **healing** work. They are used to induce **trance** or call on particular **helping spirits**. In healing they are used to attract energetic intrusions that need to be removed from the patient's body and to disburse unwanted energies stuck around the patient's body.

Rattles with **metal** pieces, like sistrums, also have powerful protective functions and were used to drive away harmful **spirits** and the harmful effects of malevolent **sorcery**, **spells**, and curses. The rattle can also be used in the beginning of a healing **ritual** to cleanse and purify the space and the patient before proceeding.

The rattle is used with the drum in most areas where **shamanism** is found. In **South America** the rattle is found primarily by itself and is used with **plant hallucinogens**. Generally speaking, in South America the handle of the rattle symbolizes the **World Tree** and the vessel represents the **Kosmos**. The seeds or pebbles inside the vessel are helping spirits and **Ancestor** spirits. By shaking the rattle the shaman calls on these spirits to assist in the work.

Arrien, Angeles. *The Four-fold Way: Walking the Paths of the Warrior, Teacher, Healer, and Visionary*. San Francisco: HarperCollins, 1993.

Vitebsky, Piers. *The Shaman*. London: Little, Brown and Company, 1995.

Red Ochre

Ochre is earth or clay containing impure iron ore creating a range of red to yellow pigments in the earth. Red ochre is a pigment made by grinding hematite or other iron oxides. Of the range of colors of ochre, red in particular is considered **sacred** by **cultures** around the world. Red ochre is often used as body paint or to adorn **costumes**, fabrics, or **power objects** in preparation for the most sacred **rituals** of many cultures.

In Upper Paleolithic times red ochre was used to redden graves, corpses,

cave walls, engraved objects, and sculptures of women. Paleolithic people often buried their dead in fetal positions, painted with red ochre.

In some cultures red ochre is used for **healing** directly. The Aborigines of **Australia** explain that female **ancestors** traveled around the world in the **dreamtime** and where they bled their menstrual **blood** congealed in the earth as red ochre. It can be used by humans for many kinds of healing, particularly those of women.

Similarly, in **Africa**, the **Zulu**, Shanga, Mashona, and Swazi people explain that red ochre is the congealed menstrual blood of either the great earth mother or the moon goddess. The ochre was believed to have spread around the world when the earth was being created. See also **aboriginal** and **colors**.

Mutwa, Credo Vusa'mazulu. *Song of the Stars: The Lore of a Zulu Shaman*. Barrytown, NY: Station Hill Openings, 1996.

Religion

Shamanism is not a religion. There is no dogma, no church, no cult, and no divine personification. There are **prayers** and **sacrifice**, but not in the abstract form of religious worship. They are common, daily actions that maintain balance and well-being.

"Religion" comes from the Latin "religio" or "religere," meaning "to tie together again." This refers to the reconnection of the creation to the creator. For shamanic, or pre-religious people, there is no need "to tie together again." The creation is not separate from the creator. They are One. They have always been and will always be One. It takes great imagination for a contemporary Western mind to make the complete shift necessary to see the world as the **shaman** does.

Scholars often refer to shamanism as the "ethnic religion" of a certain people; however, this is largely due to a lack of

imagination or **words** necessary to describe what shamanism is. It takes a generous imagination to see life from a worldview formed prior to the existence of religious thought and the dominance of the high religions in the creation psychology of humankind.

Central to shamanism is the understanding that humans are connected to all things. Traditional shamanic peoples accept this quite literally even though much of that web of connection is not visible. It took Heisenburg, in the 1970s, and his “probability principle” for science to show contemporary people that interconnectedness is not just a metaphor. Everything is connected by a very real and continuous exchange of electrons and photons. It took at least 16,000 years of human **evolution** and over 2,000 years of philosophical thought for humans to return to what shamanic peoples have known from the beginning.

Scholars have characterized pre-religious thought as a phase marked by the inability to divide real from supernatural (transcending the natural or material order) and acceptance of the related idea that inanimate objects embody **spirit** and may affect humans positively, promoting well-being, or negatively, promoting **illness**. The “inability” of shamanic people to separate the visible from the invisible worlds does not arise from a lack of intelligence or the mental ability to do so. It arises from their experience of life as simultaneously ordinary and non-ordinary. The shaman’s experience tells him/her that the separation, fundamental to a religious worldview, is not real.

World religions include Christianity, Judaism, Islam, Buddhism, Hinduism, and Gnosticism. These higher religions all embody the principle of transcendence from the state of separateness in which a godhead involves humans in an experience beyond their immediate needs. This experience of the **sacred**, or holy, is outside of the individual’s day-to-day life, created by the godhead, and not believed to be an immediate need.

For an individual in a traditional shamanic **culture**, the sacred is in all things. It is in every part of day-to-day life, it need only be recognized. The sacred does not need to be created by the godhead, for it already is. The sacred is not believed to be beyond one’s immediate needs; it is inherent in life and living.

Shamanism is not a religion. It can, however, be considered a prototype for the world’s religions. The experience of the shaman in his or her relationship with spirit parallels the original **mystical experience** of the “lonely prophet” at the center of each of the revealed religions. The intrinsic core of every known high religion (Confucianism aside) is the private revelation, or ecstatic illumination, of a prophet or **seer**. Each of the high religions begins with one individual’s revelation. The validity, function, and existence of the religion is based on the codification of this original mystical experience and the teaching of the message in that revelation to others.

The revelatory experiences at the core of the high religions are **peak experiences** that were then phrased in the conceptual, cultural, and linguistic framework of the seer at that time. It is within the natural range of human experience to have peak experiences. They are not reserved for the godhead alone. The shaman’s relationship with spirit is based on the techniques for provoking peak experiences.

There is some scholarly discussion as to whether or not shamans experience *unio mystica*, the classical ecstatic, mystical union with God. While shamans do not report having mystical union with a religious divinity, they do report returning to the source of all things or communicating with the **Great Mystery**. Perhaps the shaman frames the ecstatic experience differently precisely because he or she never created the underlying metaphor of that reunion which is the anthropomorphic God who is separate from Nature and the **earth**. It is easy to assume that it is the human condition to be separated

from God and to desire the experience of *unio mystica*; however, that assumption is only accurate for religious humankind.

Pre-religious people experience the concept of God and Nature as One, not as two or even as the union of two. Furthermore, the shaman does not believe in Oneness; the shaman experiences Oneness, particularly in his or her practice of journeying. This is not to say that shamans experience *unio mystica* every time they **journey**; they do not. Ecstatic union is not the goal of shamanic practices; it is a common fringe benefit.

It is clear that shamans have ecstatic experiences of an intensity and character to be considered genuine **mystical experiences**. One must always remember that the true mystical experience can not be captured in words; therefore, these particular experiences would be very hard to preserve in the oral traditions of shamanic cultures. Those that are preserved are expressed in a pre-religious context in terms of a through framework, not in the context and terms of religious mystical experiences.

That fact that a word for religion did not even exist in many shamanic cultures before contact does not mean that shamanic peoples did not have profoundly spiritual lives. The human concerns of questing, soulful yearnings, and existential needs have been called religious questions; however, they are also pre-religious questions. These concerns arise from roots planted deeply in the human experience of being a living, breathing, creating expression of the Great Mystery manifest in physical form. See also **knowledge**.

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Lagassé, Paul, ed. *The Columbia Encyclopedia*. 6th ed. New York: Columbia University Press, 2000.

Maslow, Abraham H. *Religions, Values, and Peak-Experiences*. New York: Penguin, 1994.

Ripinsky-Naxon, M. *The Nature of Shamanism: Substance and Function of a Religious Metaphor*. Albany: State University of New York Press, 1993.

Walsh, Roger. "Phenomenological Mapping: A Method for Describing and Comparing States of Consciousness." *Journal of Transpersonal Psychology* 27, no. 1 (1995): 25–56.

Renewal of Life

The renewal of life **ritual** is a counterpart to Siberian **hunting magic**. The purpose of the ritual is to encourage the reproduction of game animals. The survival of hunting peoples was obviously interrelated with animals; however, they also saw their fertility interrelated with the fertility of the game animals. Participation in the renewal of life ritual was both a joy and a duty to the community.

The **dances** of this ritual, some more like games and wrestling, were explicitly sexual. They were composed mainly of mimicking the rutting and mating behavior of animals, like elks and reindeer. Men and women dance, or in some versions, men dance alone. The ritual was a celebration of virility, both human and animal, and intended to please the animals **spirits** so much that the animals would engage in reproductive activities themselves.

Vitebsky, Piers. *The Shaman*. London: Little, Brown and Company, 1995.

Rewe

The *rewe* is a pole carved with steps that is the **sacred** symbol of the ***machis***, the **shamans** of the **Mapuche**. The *rewe* is climbed during **ceremonies** as the *machi* enters a deep **trance**. She stands on the top playing her **drum** and communicating with the beings of the **spirit** world.

A three-meter section of a tree is barked, notched to form steps, and set

in the ground at a slight tilt that makes it easier to climb. Tall branches may be stuck into the ground around the *rewe* to create an enclosure of 15 by 4 meters for special **rituals**. The *rewe* remains in the ground outside the *machi's* house indefinitely.

The trunk of the **Tree of Life** is the axis (*axis mundi*), running through the Center of the World that allows the shaman to travel between the realms of the spirit world. This symbolism can be recognized by the presence of seven notches or steps, representing the seven layers of the **Upperworld**. As the *machi* ascends her *rewe* she ascends into the Upperworld. See also **shamanic symbols**.

Rhythm

Rhythmic **music** is an essential component in most shamanic **rituals**. Rhythm is a primary means by which **shamans** induce the **altered states of consciousness** necessary to perform shamanic acts. Through mental and physical concentration on particular rhythms the shaman can enter altered states in which the shaman's **soul** is unbound by the normal limitation of **time** and **space**.

Rhythm was revered as a structuring force of life in the most ancient **cultures**. Today science has shown us that rhythm shapes matter. **Sound** waves introduced into various material substances creates symmetrical patterns with uniform characteristics in the substances. Disorganized, random substances become organized instantly into organic forms by rhythm. Rhythmic vibrations give form to the material world.

Our creation theories express the idea that the universe is in essence a symphony of vibrations emanating out of an enormous first beat or bang. The different harmonics correspond to different elementary particles—electron, graviton, proton, neutrino, and all the others. These elemental rhythms shape the matter of our world. See also **drum**; **journey**; **song**; **sonic driving**.

Gleick, J. "New Images of Chaos That Are Stirring a Science Revolution." *Smithsonian* 18, no. 9 (1987): 122–134.

Redmond, L. *When the Drummers Were Women: A Spiritual History of Rhythm*. New York: Three Rivers Press, 1997.

Rig Veda

The *Rig Veda* is a **sacred** book of Indo-Aryan hymns first recorded in Sanskrit approximately 3,500 years ago. It is the oldest still-extant book of the ancient Aryans, written after they began migrating from the steppes of Eurasia into the Indus Valley. **Soma** is an **ecstasy**-inducing plant, or **entheogen**, revered as a god and named in the hymns. However, the actual plant that is "Soma" is a mystery.

In *Soma: Divine Mushroom of Immortality*, R. Gordon Wasson writes that *amanita muscaria*, a **mushroom** used by **shamans** to induce shamanic **trance** states, was the original source of Soma. Wasson based his theory on linguistic and literary evidence and on the similarity between unique characteristics of the entheogen and the **altered state of consciousness** it induces and those of Soma experiences described in the *Rig Veda*.

Wasson, R. Gordon. *Soma: Divine Mushroom of Immortality*. New York: Harvest Books, 1972.

Ritual

Shamans use ritual and **ceremony** to create the quality of **sacred space** necessary for their work with **spirit** to succeed. Though "ritual" and "ceremony" are used interchangeably today, they are not the same. Ritual (seance) and ceremony are two powerful and distinct shamanic tools for creating change through the intervention of spirit in human affairs.

In ritual the **energy** spirals upward, toward spirit; it is unpredictable and uncontrollable. The shaman sets the

intention, creates the container, calls in the **spirits**, and surrenders to the ritual process. The participants don't know what is going to happen. That is the uniqueness of ritual and the magic. Ritual is a call to the Unknown and that gives ritual the **power** to heal us.

In a successful ceremony the energy spirals downward, toward the **earth**, drawing spirit into the community. Ceremony is essentially the same each time and that is the power of ceremony. It allows humans to make adjustments to correct what is taking place in the visible world, on the surface, that can be seen and observed. In ceremony it is the familiar form and familiar experience of the Divine that empowers it to build community, ease the heart, calm the mind, nourish the **soul**, and to bring people into the same **time** and **space** with one another.

Shamans use ritual to call on the spirit world to help achieve goals that the people cannot achieve in any other way. The shaman opens a sacred space, invites spirit in to help do something, and then closes the space when the **sacred** activity is complete. Shamans use ritual to create the conditions for sacredness. It is the spirits themselves that make sacredness real.

In ritual the humans are openly admitting to the spirit world that they need help with whatever they are facing as individuals or as a community. Through ritual the humans can put what they are overwhelmed by in the hands of spirit which makes it possible for things to be done better.

When humans invoke the spirit world they initiate a different context or condition for reality. Through ritual humans have superhuman help and superhuman witnesses. The shaman and the participants take the initiative to spark the process then they surrender control to allow the spirits to produce an unexpected result.

Uniqueness

Each shamanic ritual is unique because the reason for ritual is never exactly the

same twice, nor are the resources the shaman draws on. Comparing, for example, two depossession (**exorcism** or **extraction**) rituals, there will be at least the following variables: two different possessing spirits who are possessing for two different reasons in two different people who have received the **possessions** for two different reasons. Furthermore, the shaman draws the energies into the ritual from things that are always changing: the spirit world, Nature, society, **weather**, people, animals, even the illnesses keep changing. Therefore, shamans must renew the form of rituals to keep them alive and effective.

The form of a ritual changes in response to many different variables as directed by the shaman's **helping spirits**. However, the functional elements of the ritual, the **ritual structure**, must remain the same if the ritual is to be effective and safe. The ritual structure is consistent. The actions taken within this structure and the relative importance of each step varies depending on a range of variables, the foremost being the type of ritual to be performed.

Shamanic rituals lose their efficacy when simply repeated or imitated. Without an understanding of the important variables, including the original intention, the necessary preparation, and the worldview within which the ritual is held, imitation will not engage the ritual process. Exact repetition is only effective if the situation remains exactly the same, which is highly unlikely in an ever-changing world. As the variables change the efficacy of any repeated ritual will diminish.

Codifying Rituals

When the *forms* of ritual are codified, ritual can no longer serve its intended purpose, which is to open a portal in time and space between the physical and spiritual worlds and to access the Unknown. Without the ability to change the ritual to serve the specific needs of a specific situation, the shaman loses the creativity and power of ritual.

Codifying the *results* of ritual can be advantageous when it allows humans to build, preserve, and pass on huge bodies of information over time. This is particularly important when used to collect plant remedies, physical therapies, and healing **songs, chants, and dances**. In this way humans have learned complex **healing** arts like the medicinal value of thousands of plants in the rainforest or all of the acupuncture points, their interrelationships, and treatments.

Codifying *ritual* turns ritual into an empty performance that are nothing more than a series of actions practiced by rote that never actually result in accessing spirit and focusing that energy on an intended outcome. If the shaman cannot access spirit for instructions, rituals stop living. The information that was a living communication with spirit, becomes dogma. Those who hold it tend to defend its “rightness” without understanding its deeper source and meaning. As a result, the sacred in the lives of the people begins to die.

There are rituals that have been codified and turned into effective ceremony. The ritual no longer serves its intended purpose as ritual, however it can serve a new purpose as ceremony.

Elements of Ritual

There are essential elements of ritual that the humans are responsible for creating. They are: **invocation**, communication, structure, and opening and closing the ritual space. For a gathering to rise to the level of a ritual, the spirit world must be invited in. Once in, spirit provides new answers and energies to solve human problems. When the spirit world is not accessed, the humans are on their own to solve their problems.

Ritual involves authentic, real time communication with spirit. The shaman is there to take all the steps necessary to create sacred space in a safe way, to access spirit, and to interpret the communication. The shaman is responsible for orchestrating all the elements of the ritual structure, though all

the steps are not always apparent to the participants. Finally, the shaman is responsible for opening the ritual space by invoking spirit and closing the ritual space by releasing or sending spirit away.

Purity and Secrecy in Ritual

In the ritual, spirit is called to intervene in human affairs. The presence of spirit makes the act and the space sacred. The entire process and all beings, both ordinary and nonordinary, must be safely contained. Therefore opening and closing the ritual space is important. Keeping the space away from any impurities and unwanted intrusions is equally important.

Often secrecy is necessary to safely contain all the energies of a ritual. For some rituals the content and purpose of the ritual must be kept secret because any disclosure tears open the sacred space. This release of energy affects everyone and disempowers the ritual itself. There is much about traditional **shamanism** that we will never know for this reason. The Keepers of Ritual in many **cultures** went to their graves with these secrets during the time of the **persecution of shamans**.

Ritual is the art of the shaman. The medium of this art is the invisible energies of the spirit world. Through ritual the shaman moves these energies between the worlds to create the potential for change beyond that which humans can do for themselves.

Heinze, R. I. *Shamans of the 20th Century*. New York: Irvington Publishers, Inc., 1991.

Somé, M.P. *Ritual: Power, Healing, and Community*. New York: Viking Penguin, 1997.

Ritual Structure

Authentic, shamanic **rituals** are not repeated exactly the same way twice. The specifics of the form changes in response to many variables as directed by **spirit**. However, the functional

elements of the ritual, the structure, must remain the same if the ritual is to be effective and safe.

The following are seven general steps that form the structure of effective ritual. All the steps are important. None of the steps may be left out, though steps may be carried out in ways that appear insignificant or invisible to the audience.

Purpose Is Determined

The purpose of the ritual is determined by the **shaman** and/or a council. Depending on the scope and the severity of the problem the shaman may determine the purpose of the ritual through **divination** or a series of divinations. Participants may take part in determining the purpose of the ritual and/or the shaman may select participants according to the purpose.

Opening Sacred Space

The shaman determines the location of the ritual and cleanses the space. That space is now removed from ordinary activities until the ritual is closed.

Purification and Preparation

The shaman and all participants make preparations and are cleansed before they enter the **sacred space**. Once in, participants can not leave until the ritual is closed.

The Spirits Are Called In

The shaman calls in the **spirits** appropriate to the purpose of the ritual. The shaman may use the participants or a chorus to aid in calling in the spirits, usually through **song, music**, chanting, or dancing.

Communication with the Spirits

The shaman enters **trance** and communicates with the spirits. The shaman is directed by spirit to move the energies and/or to guide the participation of those present. Through the shaman's work in trance, the participants come into the presence of Spirit.

Gratitude and Closing Sacred Space

The shaman and participants thank the spirits for their intervention in human affairs and the shaman releases the

spirits. The shaman closes the sacred space completing the ritual.

Reintegration

The shaman instructs participants in the integration into their daily life and community of new energies or new perspectives gained in the ritual.

The spirits are always sent away symbolically, not dismissed. The shaman clarifies that the **sacred** purpose for which they are gathered is complete and that the humans are ready to resume normal life. When spirits are not thanked and sent away properly, they invent ways to remind the people that they are still there. **Ancestor** spirits tend to create major accidents or destruction. **Nature spirits** tend to create conflicts. Thus the whole ritual structure is essential to assure that the ritual is successful and safe.

If the purpose of the ritual is **healing**, actual healing takes place between the fourth and sixth steps. In the fourth step the shaman enters into the trance state necessary for the healing. In the fifth step the shaman begins to communicate with spirit, usually beginning with a **diagnosis**. As the ritual continues action is taken by spirit through the shaman to restore the client to health and harmony. When the healing is complete the **helping spirits** are thanked and released, sending all spirit elements back into the spirit world before the final closure of the healing ritual. Though the healing is only a small part, it will not be successful without all the steps of the ritual.

The ritual structure is consistent, though more or less detail may arise in any step as the shaman is directed by spirit. The actions taken within this structure and the relative importance of each step varies depending on the type of ritual being performed. The openings and closings are always important for the safety of all involved.

Heinze, R. I. *Shamans of the 20th Century*. New York: Irvington Publishers, Inc., 1991.

Somé, M.P. *Ritual: Power, Healing, and Community*. New York: Viking Penguin, 1997.

Roadman

A roadman is a leader of the **peyote** ceremony performed as practiced in the **Native American Church**. The roadman is the Keeper of the **ceremony** who offers the peyote sacrament. A roadman is not a **shaman**, however, a shaman can also be a roadman.

Rock Art

Ethnographic history ties rock art sites to **shamans** and the process of acquiring supernatural **powers** and **helping spirits**. Neuropsychological modeling and an increased understanding of the stages of trance has revealed a better understanding of the content, function, and origins of the **art**.

Prehistoric rock art was assumed to be part of primitive **hunting magic** or astronomical observations. However, there is no ethnographic evidence to support the theory that the art resulted from either practice. A reexamination of the rock art in the context of historic ethnography and neuropsychological modes has revealed that the art is most likely derived from trance states, particularly those of the shaman.

Many of the central characters of the rock art scenes are shamans. It is possible that creating the art was a way that the shaman communicated or illustrated his or her **altered state of consciousness** experience. This hypothesis is supported by the practice of applying new paintings over older works, implying that the act of painting was more important than the art itself. It is also possible that the illustrations are a "road map" of sorts for the uninitiated to follow as they enter trance for the first time.

San rock art, for example, is filled with representations of the visionary imagery perceived by shamans in various stages of trance. Generally speaking, there are three distinct stages of trance

that are distinguished by the distinctly different qualities of visual phenomena. Images from these three stages are seen in the rock art of **Africa** and Europe.

Luminous lines, zigzags, grids, vortices, and spots of lights most likely represent **phosphenes**, the visual sensations associated with the early stages of trance. Arcing rainbows, crescents, or corona like images, along with vague animal images are characteristic of the transitional stage as the trance state deepens. The part animal/part human beings, or **Therianthropes**, and the **spirit** forms of animals and humanoids so characteristic of rock art are also characteristic of the visual experience in deep trance. Though historically mistranslated as monsters or demons, these spirit beings are the source of power that the shaman seeks when entering trance.

Different styles in the art also reflect the predominant trance states used by the shamans of the regions in which the art is found. For example, in the Great Basin region of **North America** shamans worked primarily in deep **dream** states. The images here are rendered in a stylized fashion in that region. In contrast, shamans in the Southern **California region** often induced trance with **Datura**, the **plant hallucinogen**. The art there is rendered in a highly innovative, bizarre style reflecting the more hallucinogenic nature of that trance state.

Rock art is most likely derived from trance states; however those trance states are not necessarily all the same nor are all the artists necessarily shamans. The images are just as likely to be from the altered state experiences of non-shamans engaged sacred activities like **vision quests**, **initiation** into adulthood, or **dream incubation**.

Turpin, S. A. *Shamanism and Rock Art in North America*. San Antonio, TX: Rock Art Foundation, 1994.

Rope Trick

A term used in the literature to refer to the shaman's mysterious release from

bindings and blanket in which he is firmly bound during the **Spirit Lodge** ritual. The shamans explain that the **spirits** summoned in the **ritual** untie the **shaman**. See also **Shaking Tent Ceremony** and *yuwipi*.

Runes

Runes are the symbols of the major **magical alphabet** of central and northern Europe, usually carved on wood pieces or stone's. The runes are more than an alphabet for the transmission of information through **words**; they encapsulate an array of symbolic meanings that go far beyond our familiar, linear communication of information. The runes were part of a mystery, spiritual in nature, that connected intimately with the inner secrets of magic. The **shamans** of central and northern Europe used the runes primarily for **divination**, problem-solving, and magic. They continued to be used for magical formulae throughout the Middle Ages in northern Europe even after shamanic practices were driven underground by the spread of Christianity and organized **religion**.

The meaning of the words for rune in Old **Celtic**, Welsh and English is "to whisper" and in modern Irish the word *rún* means "secret" or "resolution." The root words for rune all show the traditional connection of the runic alphabet to its use as a divination and decision-making tool.

Like the characters of other Magical Alphabets (the Greek alphabet, the Celtic **ogams**, the Hebrew alphabet of the Kabbalah, etc.) each individual runic character has not only a name and **sound**, but they also represent many different objects that express the dynamics of specific qualities. For example, the runes engraved or inlaid into weapons record the weapon's name and the magical qualities of that weapon, while the runes found on other artifacts are considered to be magical formulae for **healing** or love.

The rune symbols hold many layers of meaning. Like the ogham alphabet

each rune is associated with a tree, which expresses the quality of the rune. Traditionally, the runes are also associated with gods, goddesses, the elements, seasons, and various qualities of family, community, and life force or **power**.

Initiation into the secrets of the shamanic or the bardic professions gave the initiate an understanding of deeper layers of meaning in the runes and the ability to use them for magic. However, the runes could be used for problem-solving by anyone who could read them at even the simplest level of interpretation. When needed, a branch was broken from a fruit tree, cut into twenty-four slivers, and carved with the runic alphabet. The slivers were then cast onto a white cloth. Three were picked up, one at a time, and the meaning interpreted from the runic symbols drawn.

For more powerful acts of divination or magic, a rune casting **ceremony** was performed by a shaman, bard, magician or sorcerer. This ceremonial method was known as *Raed Waen*, which means "riding the wagon" and refers to the act of placing oneself in the position of deity on the **sacred** wagon from which all things—past, present, and future—can be viewed. To perform the *Raed Waen*, the rune caster must consider several aspects of the physical location to be used and timing of the ceremony. At a minimum these considerations included the axis of the space, its orientation to the four directions and the gods and goddesses who inhabit the directions, prevailing local forces of man, customs, and nature, the *Nowl* (navel) point created when the shawl (casting cloth) is spread, and the various ceremonial objects to be incorporated into the ceremony.

The actual casting is performed on a shawl, a white cloth whose dimensions are the length of the diviner from fingers to toes and the width of their outstretched arms. Functionally, the shawl serves to define the rune caster's place in **space** and **time**. Shaws were used by

shamans for the same purpose in their healing **rituals** and long distance journeying work.

The **myth** of the origin of the first ten runic characters is associated with **Odin**, the Norse shaman-god of magic, poetry, divination, inspiration, and shamanic practices. Odin's revelation of how humans could use the runes for divination (communication with the spirit world) came about in an act of self sacrifice on the **World Tree**, Yggdrassil. Wounded by a spear, Odin hung himself upside down by one foot from Yggdrassil for nine days and nights without food or **water**. Odin's insight on the ninth night was inspired by the rune sigils (symbols) themselves, believed to have been drawn first by the gods. In the moment that he grasped the new use, which was a synthesis of the relationship between the intuitive use of rune sigils and the rational phonetic alphabet, he fell from the tree, ending his suffering.

It does appear, historically, that many of the runes were derived initially from two basically separate sources. Though the origin of the runic alphabet has not been determined by scholars in the field, the concurrence of certain characters in ancient European rock carvings (the sigils used intuitively) and Mediterranean alphabets (the Phoenician Ahiram used rationally) makes it plain that two sources were involved.

The runes together express the fundamental nature of the inner structure of reality as these ancient peoples saw it. Each individual rune encapsulates a certain aspect of that existence; it is one piece of the fundamental nature of the whole of the **Kosmos**. The meaning of each of the runes is fixed, as described in the rune poems, and plays apart in the whole reality described. However, each new day brings new experiences, new developments, and new relationships, all ultimately new expressions of the inherent structure of reality. The fixed runic meanings take on fresh significance in relation to the new circumstances and gain another layer of

interpretation. It is because of the eternally fluid nature of existence that the simple runic symbols have deep, multi-layered meanings that can convey the true nature of the Kosmos and thus provide a powerful and lasting tool for divination and magic.

There are three ancient Rune Poem texts: **Anglo Saxon**, Norwegian, and Icelandic. They each show us the specific meanings of the runes, or more correctly, the Futhark (a runic row), from earliest times. The earliest complete rune row dates from the early fifth century and is carved in a Gothic stone from Kylver, on the island of Gotland, Sweden. There have been a considerable number of runic alphabets, the oldest complete version is called the Elder Futhark or Common German Futhark.

The Elder Futhark has twenty-four characters, collected into three groups of eight, called *aetts*. Runes are read from the bottom of the center to the top, down the right side, and up the left. The order of the Elder Futhark is fixed. To alter the order would be to disrupt and render the pattern meaningless, for they are in a precise sequence directly related to the cycles of time. Historically, the runes remained almost unaltered in order, though not in number of characters.

The following is a brief summary of the symbolic meaning of the twenty-four runes of the Elder Futhark. Alternative names are in parentheses.

The first rune of all runic alphabets is *Feoh*, meaning cattle. Literally, cattle refers to movable and negotiable wealth, unlike the homestead or other inherited wealth. Symbolically *Feoh* signifies wealth that can be traded or exchanged. Thus *Feoh* represents both the accumulation of this two-fold power—physically controlling the wealth and economically controlling the trade—and the responsibilities that ownership brings. *Feoh* also warns against greed and envy, the problems that arise from this type of wealth.

The second rune, *Ur*, means *auroch*, the extinct wild ox, a symbol of the

raw, impersonal, tameless power of wild cattle. *Ur* symbolizes the limitless power of the universe, the awesome **embodiment** of unlimited creative potential. *Ur* is a symbol of the power of collective will because its power, irresponsible by nature, ensures that it can never be restricted to a single individual. Magically *Ur* brings good fortune, collective strength, and personal success measured in terms of common good.

Thorn (Thurisaz) denotes the resistant and protective qualities of the thorn tree. Mythologically, *Thorn* signifies the defensive powers of Mjöllnir, the Hammer of Thor, symbolic of the power that resists everything that threatens the natural order of things. *Thorn* symbolizes the willful application of the generative principle and the creative **energy** of the masculine as it flows within the natural order of things.

The fourth rune, *As* (Asc, Asa, Ansuz), signifies the divine force in action. *As* represents the **Ash** tree, which in Norse tradition is the World Tree, Yggdrassil, the cosmic axis of the universe. This rune symbolizes the divine power that oversees the maintenance of order in the cosmos.

Rad (Raed, Rit) refers to riding, implying both horsemanship and sexual intercourse, and represents all forms of formalized, directed activity. *Rad* signifies the necessity to channel our energies in an appropriate manner to achieve the results we desire and emphasizes the necessity to be in the right place at the right time to perform the appropriate act.

Ken (Cen, Kennaz) means the chip of pine wood that burns to illuminate the house. The rune represents illumination, bringing light into darkness, and the transformation necessary to achieve it. Mystically, *Ken* represents the creation achieved through the union of two separate entities and the transformation that creates the third which did not exist before. *Ken* calls forth of the inner light of **knowledge** gained only through transformation, giving it the

second meaning of regeneration through death.

Gyfu (Gebo) means gift and signifies the unifying effect that a gift makes between the donor and the recipient. *Gyfu* is the quality personified in The Norse goddess Gefn, the bountiful giver. *Gyfu* expresses the feminine qualities of linking seemingly separate people in common bond or the link between a human and the divine.

The eighth rune is *Wyn* (Wunnaz, Wunjo) and is the last run of the first *aett*. Shaped like a wind vane, *Wyn* represents the joy that arises from one's ability to remain in harmony with the flow of events. It is the rune of fellowship, shared aims, and general well-being. *Wyn* represents the balance that must be maintained in order to lead a sane and happy existence and to fulfill our wishes and desires without disillusion or attachment.

Hagel (Haegl), meaning hail, begins the second *aett*. The structure of hail and the results of its storms are symbolic of the results of the forces which arise from the nature of the Kosmos rather than the results arising from human creativity. *Hagel* symbolizes the disruptive agency working in the unconscious mind that causes needed change in established thought processes. It is associated with Hiemdal, the watcher god whose Rainbow Bridge (Bifröst) links the **Middleworld** with the **Upperworld**, and Mordgud, the goddess who guards the bridge from the Middleworld to the **Lowerworld**. *Hagel* signifies the link between the worlds and between human consciousness and other planets.

The tenth rune *Nyd* (Not) means need. It expresses the maxim that the ability to be released from need exists within the need itself. Thus, *Nyd* calls for caution in action and the wisdom to look within oneself before acting.

Is (Isa) means ice and refers to several aspects of the principle of static existence. Where fluid water becomes resistant ice, *Is* signifies cessation of progress or termination of relationship.

Where solid ice is recognized as having the potential to melt and become fluid, *Is* is associated with death. Where ice becomes the irresistible force of a glacier, *Is* is symbolic of the power of inexorable forces.

Jera (Ger, Jara, Jer) means year or season and refers to the cycles of time. *Jera* symbolizes the fruitful results of doing things in the correct order and at the fitting time. The power expressed by *Jera* is that beneficial results always transpire when human activities are conducted according to the correct principles and are done in harmony with the natural order.

Eihwaz (Eoh) means yew tree. The yew, considered the tree of death and rebirth was sought for making **bows** and the staves of spears. *Eihwaz* is symbolic of the dual power of protecting the dead and of giving access to the Otherworld of **spirit**.

The fourteenth rune *Peorth* (Peord, Perthro) means game piece, dice, or dice cup. It is symbolic of the dynamic relationship between the action of the conscious free will and the constraint of existing circumstances. Just as circumstances often inspire innovation, *Peorth* is the power of the manifestation of that which was formerly concealed. In this sense it represent the fertile **womb** of the All Mother which brings into existence the world.

Elhaz signifies the elk and the sedge plant, both noted for their ability to protect. *Elhaz* is considered the most powerful of the runes for protection against those influences which we find in conflict with ourselves. Spiritually it denotes our conflict with ourselves in our aspiration toward divine qualities.

Sigil (Sig, Sowilo) means **sun** and represents the power of the sacred solar disc and the vital qualities of daylight. *Sigil* is symbolic of clear vision and ready accomplishment in the physical or spiritual plane. It also represent the conscious magical will at work in a selfless way, bringing the strength to resist the powers of death and disintegration. The last rune of the second *aett*, it is

considered the rune of victory.

Beginning the final *aett*, *Tyr* (Tiwaz, Ziu), is named after the **sky** god of central and northern Europe and is considered the rune of justice. *Tyr* represents the qualities of steady, reliable, positive regulation resulting from just rule as well as the self-sacrifice of the ruler necessary in order to rule justly. Thus the rune denotes the essential relationship between successful accomplishment and the sacrifice necessary to succeed.

The eighteenth rune *Beorc* (Birkana, Bar) means birch tree. The birch, the traditional tree cut for the central maypole of the Beltaine festival on May 1, is the ancient northern European symbol of **purification** and regeneration. Signifying regeneration and new beginnings, the rune's powers are related to the **Earth** goddess, Nerthus, the creative energy of the feminine.

Ehwaz (Eh) means horse and refers to the intuitive bond between horse and rider, not the action of riding as signified in the rune *Rad*. Symbolic of the combination of two, the underlying power of *Ehwaz* is the trust and loyalty necessary to accomplish the task of life our **soul** has arrived here to do.

Man (Mannaz) is the rune of the human being and the basic nature present in every person. The rune denotes the full range of human experience and expression, without which the full potential of our lives cannot be realized.

The twenty-first rune, *Lagu* signifies water in all its aspects and is symbolic of the ever-changing nature of existence. Central to this rune is the irresistible power of growth, which is always cyclical and fundamental in all matter. The flow implied in *Lagu* signifies the medium through which humans pass in life and the inherent risk in that passage. *Lagu* cautions that balance is attained through accepting the ebb and flow of nature and the cycles of growth.

The twenty-second rune, *Ing* (Ingwaz), is named after the god Ing, the male consort of Nerthus, goddess of fertility and nurturance. *Ing* guards the

hearthfire (inglenook) and the rune has long been used for protection of households and as a symbol of light. The masculine character of *Ing* represents both the type of energy that must accumulate slowly over time before it can be released in one enormous burst and the responsibility for the consequences of such a release of power.

The twenty-third rune, *Odal* (Odil Ethil, Ethel), means ancestral land, or the homestead of the family. This rune represents the qualities of belonging, togetherness, ancestral heritage, and unique familial characteristics passed down through the generations. The rune is symbolic of the innate qualities, both material and spiritual, within anything.

The twenty-fourth and final rune of the third *aett* is *Dag* (Dagaz), which means day. *Dag* is the rune of the bright day, with the sun at its zenith and the season in midsummer. Carrying the central message that Spirit is in all things, *Dag* is the rune of light, health, radiance, and prosperity. Spiritually, it is the rune of cosmic consciousness and the joy and strength found in any source of divine light. As the end of the cycle, *Dag* is also a beginning. It is a door,

symbolic of the door that lies at midsummer when half the light is rising and half the light is declining.

Various rune poems have included up to thirty-three rune symbols. As with all alphabets, there are many variant forms, for example the Danish or Norse variations. The eight characters, drawn from different alphabets and different historical times, can be considered a fourth *aett*. They are *Ac*, *Os*, *Yr*, *Ior*, *Ear*, *Calc*, *Stan*, and *Gar*.

When using the twenty-four Elder Futhark runes there are also reversed meanings to be considered. If the rune is drawn in an inverted position then the meaning is generally reversed. This applies also to the Anglo-Saxon twenty-nine rune system. With the thirty-three runes of the Northumbrian system, or the Thirty-eight runes of the extended system, there is only one reading for each rune. These combinations of possibilities increase the already rich complexity of interpretation. See also **Tree of Life**.

Pennick, N. *Magical Alphabets*. York Beach, ME: Samuel Wieser, Inc., 1992.

S

Saami

The **First People** of Northern Scandinavia, also called Lapps by outsiders. Samiland, their homeland, encompasses the northern portions of what is now Finland, Sweden, Norway, and the northwestern corner of Russia.

The most important tool of the Saami *noðide* (shaman) is his **drum**. From the late 17th to the middle of the 18th century, drums, drumming, and all related shamanic activities were forbidden and effectively suppressed in an effort to break the spirit and erase the culture of the Saami people. The drums of the Saami were confiscated and destroyed by **fire**. The Scandinavian courts of law imposed severe penalties and heavy fines on those who kept their drums. Some were flogged or burned at the stake.

Unfortunately, the majority of the owners of magical drums were the heads of families, fathers whose role it was to function as the **family shaman**. Many fathers and their eldest sons were taken from their families and shot simply because it was their tradition to solve practical problems by using their drums to ask their guardian **spirits** for guidance.

In contrast to the family shaman, the *noðide* is a shaman as defined in this volume. The *noðide* had greater **knowledge** and ability to control his *gaddse* (guardian spirits) and *saivo* (**power animal**). This gave him greater access to more powerful spirits than the ordinary man who acted as a passive medium, receiving and interpreting messages from ancestor spirits.

The Saami *noðide* share a fundamental ideology and many **healing**

techniques based on the practice of **soul flight** with the shamans of other circumpolar peoples. The following are the elements of Siberian **shamanism** not practiced by the Saami: performing transference rites to cure epidemics, officiating ceremonies involving animal **sacrifice**, **hunting magic**, and the special **costume** empowered by spirit.

It is possible that the Saami *noðide* was more active in hunting magic when the Saami people were more dependent on hunting and fishing for food. In the beginning of the 17th century, the Saami transitioned into reindeer herding, a pastoral way of life which shifted their culture and economy in such a way that a scarcity of game was no longer a crisis to be solved by the shaman.

Saami Philosophy

The Saami look to the **Sun** as the source of life. The Sun gave birth to life. Its light falls from above into the bodies of the **earth**, the animals, the humans who all get heavier and heavier with the spark of life inside. The spark of life is in everything. When humans reconnect with the spark of life they can remember the Source of All Things and be Whole. Therefore, the Saami also believe that humans have to go into their own darkness to release the spark of life from that darkness.

In practice the reindeer herding Saami pursue this Wholeness, which they believed is created within the individual by balancing the Mother/Father dyad internally. In this principle the “Mother” is symbolic of the qualities one is given at birth that are innate to one’s nature. The life issues that arise are ones of nourishment and internal creation. The solutions are found in the Moon Path, in the Moon Mythology, and in the **journey** into the spirit realms.

The “Father” is symbolic of doing, speaking, setting priorities, and taking action to bring one’s innate nature into full manifestation. The issues that arise are ones of manifestation and creation

in the world. The solutions are found in the Sun Path, the Sun Mythology, and in action in the physical realm.

Moon Path

Traveling the Moon Path demands the journey through the body and out, into **dreams, intuition, and altered states of consciousness**. The Moon Path involves death and the driving **rhythm** of the drum to open the doors to perception. The helping spirit is the Moon Woman, or Moon Hunter, and the cycles of the **moon**. She is the big hunter, carrying bow and spear, stalking the light and losing it.

Sun Path

Traveling the Sun Path is the waking of the Dreamer. It involves remembering the good, recreating the body from the inside out, and expressing the dreams to manifest them. The Sun is the **circle** that tells of the journey of getting home. It is the mythology of being called back to the light. The helping spirit is the Sun, the sunray that reaches across the room, walking out in Nature, softening intellect, sustaining good humor, and opening to creativity.

The Crystal Bridge

The Crystal Bridge, or rainbow, is the connection between the Sun and the Moon, like the corpus callosum that connects the two hemispheres of the brain. It is a bridge of white light given by the sun to allow people a way to create balance. White animals are believed to be connected with the Crystal Bridge.

Tree of Life

The Saami **Tree of Life** is superimposed with an animal cosmology. Both are used to diagnose illness and the necessary remedy for the patient to bring balance to his or her life. The tree is seen as a metaphor for life development as a whole. Illnesses, weakness, or pain results in the places where life development has stagnated.

Different parts of the body are associated with different animals which are used as metaphors for the nature of the

stagnation in that area of the body. Strengthening the relationship between the patient and the animal is an important part of the healing process.

For example, the roots of the tree are associated with the Bear who wakes from her long dream of hibernation and must find the earth. A Bear stagnation is one in the foundational **energy** that holds the structure and form of the patient's **soul**. Cultivating a relationship with the spirit of Bear would be a strong aspect of the patient's healing.

The Dragon rises from the foundation of the Bear through its ability to raise the **inner fire**. The inability to nourish the spark of life and raise inner fire is the next place of stagnation. Cultivating the energies of touch, feeling, and inner awareness associated with the Dragon are an aspect of this healing process.

When inner fire is healthy within the patient then the next place of stagnation is the ability to act as an individual in the world. These energies are associated with the Wolf who is a master of the ability to rise up, go out, and hunt. The spirit of the Wolf teaches the patient about responsibility, functioning in the here and now, and establishing hierarchy or order, like the social order of the pack.

Once order is established the next place of stagnation is in the ability to express the **power** of the heart and the ability to sacrifice. These attributes are associated with the Reindeer who carries the moon/sun silver/golden horns and shines on everyone equally with no need for hierarchy. Through cultivation of a relationship with the Reindeer spirit the patient learns to give of him/herself, to create an ideal life that is flexible, free of revenge and at peace with darker side of human nature.

The Reindeer's horns are paths to the **Upperworld**. Once a connection to the spirit world is established, the **Bird** energy emerges that is associated with expressing sight, vision, and the capacity for spiritual insight. Without this energy the individual stays closed to

spirit and his or her cultivation of “true sight” stagnates along with the individual’s maturation into a full adult in Saami society.

Drum

Saami shamans traditionally paint their drums with a representation of their inner cosmology, which displays the Saami universe holistically in both geography and ideology. In other words, they paint their drums with a multi-dimensional map of their experience of the terrain of the spirit world and their own orientation within it. Saami *noðide* create some of the most ornate drum skins found in shamanism anywhere.

Saami drums are double headed, **frame drums** with both faces of the skin covered in images. The images on each drum and each side of a single drum are unique, although they always include the sun and moon, the **World Tree**, and the rainbow or crystal bridge in some fashion. This microcosm of the spirit world depicts the three realms of the Upperworld, **Middleworld**, and **Lower-world** and the figures of many of the significant beings the Saami encounter regularly in these realms. The design a *noðide* paints on his drum is believed to be given by spirit.

The drumming and **singing** are used at the beginning of **rituals** to summon the spirits into the ritual space and to embody them in the *noðide*’s drum. Drumming is used to induce **trance** for healings and **divination** and the drum itself is used as a tool to perform various types of divination that do not involve deep trance states.

The Saami used different rhythms as a code to speak to the spirit world. One rhythm was used to summon **giants** (raw energy), demons, **chaos**, or division. Another rhythm was used to summon ice, order, **Odin** (the Great Shaman from the Upperworld), or unification.

The bow was also used to induce trance states. A single string was strung on a reindeer antler and plucked to produce a monotonous, droning tone. The

bow is considered “less demanding” than the drum as a means of trance **induction** and tended to be used for journeys to the Upperworld and/or at the *noðide*’s discretion.

Divination

Divinations in which the drum is the tool of divination were performed by the family shaman and the *noðide*. The “shaman” performed this technique either alone, together with a client, or with a group. The drum is held with the plane of the faces parallel to the plane of the floor. A moveable **metal** ring(s) or other kind of pointer or frog is placed on the top drum skin. The drum is beaten gently with the drumstick so that the pointer moves across the drumhead, but does not fall to the ground, though in certain circumstances the fall to the ground would be considered the answer.

The movement of the pointer in relation to the figures on the drum is interpreted as an answer. Of particular importance is whether or not the pointer stays at a certain figure as the drumming continues and the movement of the pointer in a clockwise or counter-clockwise direction.

When a more extensive divination is necessary the *noðide* is able to combine this drum technique with the performance of a in deeper trance. In this case, the presence of others to **sing** continuously is important to support the *noðide* journey into the spirit world.

When the drum divination is complete the *noðide* begins to beat the drum in a stronger rhythm meant to induce trance. As he enters trance he lies back in an altered state of consciousness, allowing his soul to seek further information in the spirit world. Since the drumming has now stopped, it is important that the singers continue until the *noðide*’s soul has returned to his body. This method was most often used to diagnosis **illness**, to determine the appropriate remedy, and travel to a remote location.

Remedies derived from this type of divination often involved extracting a promise from the patient to make a specific sacrifice and then clarifying the kind of sacrifice: reindeer, bull, oxen, buck, ram, or other, what *Storjunkare* (wood or stone figure embodying a particular spirit) to make the sacrifice to, and where, on what mountain, to make it. Sacrifices were also made to Thor or the Sun for cures.

The Saami used divination to determine events at far off locations, luck or misfortune, location of game, diagnosis, remedies, and the type of sacrifice and to whom it should be offered.

Acquiring Power

Generally, the two forms of obtaining shamanic powers coexist among the Saami, as do the two types of shamans, family and *noðide*. The gift of shamanic talent is transmitted in a family and the powers are in part hereditary. This is particularly the case for the family shaman, the head of the family who engages in divination rituals to better guide his decision making for the family.

The *noðide*, the professional shaman's is granted power directly by the spirits, in particular Thor, the Sun, or the spirits of **dead shamans** among the *Sájva-olmak*. The spirits grant power to whomever they wish to bestow it to. The initial experience of **the call** is spontaneous, the spirit forcing itself into **possession** of the chosen one. Those who resist develop mental and physical illness, until they relent to the demands of the spirit.

Once the individual surrenders to the will of the spirits, they instruct the future shaman in the use of this power through dreams and **visions**. Saami shamans today still tell stories of their ancestors who were able to fly through the air and perform other displays of power.

Helping Spirits

The **helping spirits** in animal form play an important role in Saami shamanism. The *noðide* uses drumming, singing,

and dancing to call the spirits into the ritual space, into the drum, and into the *noðide*'s body in preparation for the ecstatic journey. The dancing of the *noðide* often begins by imitating the movements and cries of the animal. As the dancing continues Saami *noðide* merge with their helping spirits and become wolves, bears, reindeer, fish, dragons, **birds**, etc.

Secret Language

In the course of his **training** the novice *noðide* has to learn the secret **language** that allows him to communicate with the spirits and **animal spirits** during his rituals. This secret language is learned from a master *noðide* or directly from spirits. This is the language of all Nature, of all life, from the time when all things were One.

Healing

Illness is believed to be caused by natural and/or supernatural causes. The role of the *noðide* is to restore balance within the individual, the community, or the world at large. Supernatural causes are primarily believed to be the **soul loss** of a person, group of people, a place, or thing.

The Saami *noðide* performed their healing rituals stripped to a breechcloth or entirely naked, like many North American Arctic peoples. Using drumming primarily and singing and dance, the *noðide* attained a deep trance state during which his soul descended into the Lowerworld to locate the lost souls the sick or to escort the soul of the dead to *Sájva-ájmuo*, the **Land of the Dead**.

The shaman's role after locating the lost soul was to engage in combat for the soul or to negotiate a sacrifice to be performed later by the patient in exchange for the soul. The journey to the Lowerworld and *Sájva-ájmuo* was the most common journey for the *noðide*. One of the Saami words for trance is "immersion," signifying the importance of the underwater and lowerworld aspect of the *noðide*'s journey.

The Saami shaman's journeys to the Lowerworld began with a journey to a

mountain that functioned as the **World Mountain**. However, from there the *nodide* usually traveled down. The only remaining examples of the *nodide* journeying to the Upperworld are preserved in the late oral tradition. There does not appear to have been a prohibition to journeying up and the Tree of Life and World Mountain clearly provided access. There simply appears to have been a lack of need, interest, or records of these journeys.

Costume

Saami *nodide* perform without a costume. There are records of hats worn by the *nodide* adorned with stars that represented sexual power that has been transformed and released through the crown chakra.

Storytelling

The Saami have a rich history of **storytelling**. It is a form of teaching that has been used since the beginning of time. Among the Saami the stories are often sung. These singers possess a virtually endless fount of stories the central theme of which is the recreation and continuance of the **sacred**, and the relationship of the Saami people to the sacred in all things.

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Sacred

Sacred means where the **spirit** occurs. Experiences and things are sacred when they allow us to establish conscious

relations with the Transcendent. The Transcendent may be experienced as God, Nature, the Absolute, the Universe, the Source of All Things, or however the **Great Mystery** is personally understood.

The sacred is not merely a state of consciousness. To have an experience of the sacred demands that we establish conscious relations with spirit. An individual's belief in the sacred does not make it so. The sacred exists, whether we believe in it or not.

From a shamanic point of view, everything is sacred because everything is imbued with spirit. Everything is imbued with spirit because everything is connected in a very real, energetic way. Living in a sacred way is to live with a awareness of your connection to all things. In the words of Malidoma Somé, a West African **shaman**, "a sacred life is a ritualized life, that is, one that draws constantly from the realm of the spiritual to handle even the smallest situation." See also **Africa; ritual; sacred space; spirits**.

Eliade, Mircea. *Shamanism: Archaic Techniques of Ecstasy*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1964.

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Sacred Language

Shamans in many **cultures** speak a sacred language, usually unintelligible to others, while in **trance**. In anthropology "sacred language" refers to a unique shamanic language employed to speak with **helping spirit(s)**. For example, the **Lakota** call it *hanbloglagia* and the Sukuma people call it *kinaturu* to distinguish it from common language. The **Chukchee**, **Tungus**, Lapps, **Yakuts**, Semang pygmies, North Borneo cults,

Brazilian **Umbanda** cult, the **Zulu** Amandiki cult, the Trhi-speaking **priests** of Ghana, and the Hudson Bay **Eskimos** are all examples of peoples whose shamans speak (or spoke) in a special language while in trance.

It is believed that in the beginning after the **First Shaman** began to teach others, that these shamans extended their **knowledge** of extraordinary things as they helped humankind. They also developed a sacred language, a language of tones and frequencies that was only used for communicating with the **spirits**. It was taught to a very small number of persons and even they did not use it in everyday speech.

In some cultures the shaman's sacred language is composed of old words which are related to the common language. These shamanic languages are partially intelligible to the ceremonial audience without translation. In other cultures only the shaman can understand the sacred language and one of the shaman's assistants must translate for the audience.

In other cultures the process of communication and translation is even more complex. Among the **Inuit**, for example, the shaman works in trance with a special helping **spirit** whose sole role is to interpret all the other spirits for the shaman. Similarly, **Mikenak** the turtle spirit, takes the shaman's questions to the spirits and returns with answers during the **Shaking Tent Ceremony** of the **Ojibwa**.

Art is an important extension of the shaman's sacred language. There are aspects of the **sacred** that cannot be translated into words, but can be expressed through a visual or performing art, like **sand painting** or **song**. For this reason, art is used by shamans as a **healing** tool and as an expression of the sacred qualities of their ecstatic experience. See also **ecstasy** and **glossolalia**.

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Sacred Pipe

The sacred pipe is one of the most widespread **power objects** used by **aboriginal** North Americans in **healing** and **prayer**. The **ritual** smoking of **tobacco** with the sacred pipe is practiced alone as prayer or as part of the **sweat lodge** ceremony, or any of the other rituals and ceremonies practiced in **North America**.

The ritual smoking of any sacred pipe is an act of sending one's prayers directly to the source-of-all-things. If performed correctly, the ritual is a means of communication between the realms. Elaborate **ceremony** has evolved around the use of the sacred pipe, its handling, loading, and smoking. The pipe is activated by inserting the stem into the bowl. When inactive, the pipe is kept in two pieces, with the related **paraphernalia**, in a beautifully decorated, skin bag.

Smoking tobacco is a sacrament for the indigenous North American. The sacred pipe has evolved from its earliest tubular structure into many different forms in many different areas. Originally made from the straight leg bones of large mammals, the most common form now is carved from catlinite, or "pipestone," a dark, red stone symbolic of the **blood** of the **Ancestors** and/or the buffalo. This mineral is found in only one location in the world, along Pipestone Creek in Minnesota, an area now protected as Pipestone National Monument. It is estimated that quarrying for pipestone at this site began as early as 1600.

One of the most powerful sacred pipes was brought to the **Lakota** by the **spirit** being and **teacher** White Buffalo Calf Woman. Her message is believed to

be directly from *wakan tanka* and the pipe remains with the people as a means to communicate directly with *wakan tanka*. This pipe and its **medicine bundle** are believed to be from between 1785–1800.

Shamans are among the acceptable pipe carriers. The sacred pipe is alive and is treated with the utmost respect. It is an object of great supernatural **power**. Shamans who carry a sacred pipe believe that through the proper use of the sacred pipe, good health, protection, abundant game and crops, and control of the **weather** can all be assured.

Pipe carriers usually used a blend of tobacco and other herbs or plants. Each pipe carrier gathers the plants, prepares the components, and creates his own mixtures. Traditionally these mixtures do not contain psychoactive ingredients. Power of the sacred pipe is more akin to shamanic prayer than to shamanic **trance**. See also **sacred**.

Lyon, William S. *Encyclopedia of Native American Healing*. New York: W. W. Norton & Company, 1996.

Sacred Space

Sacred space is physical space in which **spirit** is alive, present, and available to humans who share that space. **Shamans** open sacred space by calling **spirits** into a **circle** of humans in order to help achieve goals that cannot be achieved in any other way. The shaman creates the conditions for sacredness. The sacredness is created by the spirits themselves. The shaman opens a space, invites spirit in to make it sacred, and closes the space when the sacred activity is complete.

Sacred space is necessary for shamanic work. The most minimal role of sacred space is to provide a place where **power objects** and other sacred **paraphernalia** can be laid out and protected. The greatest role of sacred space is to provide space for wounded **souls** to be laid out and protected so that they can

be healed and transformed by the spirits through the efforts of the shaman.

Sacred space is an in between place, no longer truly ordinary or non-ordinary, but touching both. It is ordinary space permeated by the energies of the Otherworld. Different laws operate in the Otherworld. The shaman will be able to operate according to those Otherworldly laws within the sacred space if it has been properly set up.

Using sacred space, the shaman creates a different context or condition for human transformation by bringing in the spirit world. This space must remain a safe container for transformation in the way a mother's belly safely contains the transformation of the baby inside. Sacred space itself is shy. It must be kept free from impurities and unwanted intrusions.

It is essential that sacred space is closed with the same care through which it is opened. The spirit beings called into the sacred space must be thanked and released. The shaman tells the spirits that what the humans embarked upon is over and that they are ready to resume normal life. In this way the spirits are sent away symbolically, though not dismissed.

When sacred space is not closed well, the spirits will invent a way to remind the humans that the spirits are still there and the sacred space is still open. **Ancestor** spirits tend to create incidents of major accidents or destruction. **Nature spirits** tend to create incidents of conflict. See also **ritual** and **shamanic healing**.

Eliade, Mircea. *Shamanism: Archaic Techniques of Ecstasy*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1964.

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Sacred Technologies

The various techniques used by **shamans** to enter into **altered states of consciousness** in which they come into contact with the Divine. It is in **trance** that the invisible world of **spirit** becomes visible for the shaman. Mastery of these **techniques of ecstasy** is the essential characteristic of **shamanism**. These techniques include, but are not limited to: dancing, drumming, and ingesting psychotropic **plant medicines (entheogens)**. See also **dance; drum; ecstasy; sacred**.

Eliade, Mircea. *Shamanism: Archaic Techniques of Ecstasy*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1964.

Sacrifice

Sacrifice, which can be seen as an equivalent exchange of energies, is an essential element in **shamanism**. Sacrifice is exacted on several different levels.

Shamanic **rituals** often involve the actual sacrifice of an animal or object. In some **cultures** what is sacrificed distinguishes different kinds of **shamans**. Those who benefit from the shaman's rituals must make sacrifices to restore balance with the spirit world. Finally, shamans experience great personal suffering and sacrifice to gain their **power** and to keep it.

Sacrifices, which range from the fee offered by the patient to the killing of an animal, are a usual part of shamanic rituals. The **Dagara**, for example, determine the necessary sacrifice for a ritual through **divination**. The appropriate sacrifice is always relative to the purpose of the ritual. For a ritual to be successful, the sacrifice must be correct. The **spirits** do not recognize inappropriate sacrifices. They will not take what they do not need. How the sacrificed animal dies contributes information to the overall divination and **diagnosis** of the situation.

Generally, animal (**blood**) sacrifices, are required in situations of **disease** or

death. The blood sacrifice is offered to fend off or to placate a malevolent spirit or ghost whose presence is causing disease or death.

An animal is often sacrificed as part of funeral rites to free that animal's **soul** to aid the deceased in his or her **journey** in the Otherworld. For example, the Sora sacrifice a buffalo and Siberian and Mongolian shamans sacrifice a horse or caribou. The shaman is called on to perform these sacrifices, because he or she alone can assure that the soul of the animal, as well as that of the deceased, finds safe passage to their right place in the Otherworld.

In some cultures shamans are distinguished by the types of sacrifices they perform. These distinctions are often translated as "black" and "white," perhaps reflecting the bias of the reporter more than the sentiment of the culture. For example, the **Yakut** distinguish between *oyun*, male "shamans," and *udaghan*, female shamans.

The *udaghan* enter **trance** to deal with malevolent spirits in the **Lower-world** who bring disease, starvation, and death. This work often necessitates animal sacrifices to protect the people. The *oyun* do not enter trance or make blood sacrifices. They attend to problems that can be resolved with lesser **offerings, blessings, and prayers** offered to the beings of the **Upperworld**.

The people who benefit from the shaman's rituals must also make sacrifices in order to restore balance and harmony. All people are responsible for maintaining balance between the human and animal communities, and between the human and spirit communities. It is common for **Eskimo** shamans to return from divination journeys demanding of the audience full and immediate public disclosure of all transgressions against each other to restore balance and harmony in the community.

All people who partake in food, clothing, and shelter from the sacrifice of animal lives must honor that animal's sacrifice in kind. An Eskimo shaman

explains that “the greatest peril of life lies in the fact that human food consists entirely of souls. All the creatures we have to kill and eat, all those we have to strike down and destroy to make clothes for ourselves, have souls, as we have.” The soul of the animal is honored in a feast of gratitude during which some sacrifice is made to show the spirits the sincerity of the human needs and thanks.

In some cultures the sacrificial offerings necessary to propitiate the spirits and restore the proper balance between the worlds are extreme. For example, Tukanoan shamans enter the spirit world and travel to the realm of the Master of Animals where the shaman asks permission to hunt and fish. Permission is granted for the price of a number of human souls whose soul-stuff must be sent into the realm of the Master of Animals. The shaman must pledge himself to kill this number of people, of his or a neighboring group, and perform the necessary rituals to send their soul stuff into the Master’s realm. Though extreme, this practice did allow the Tukanoan people to maintain stable and sustainable populations for thousands of years.

Shamans experience great personal suffering and sacrifice to gain their power. The initial experience of death and rebirth, central to the shaman’s **initiation**, is not a metaphor. The experience is literal and terrifying, leaving those who cannot find their way through the fear of death to “rebirth” either dead, insane, or diminished in some way for life.

The shaman’s path demands continual sacrifice to maintain, rejuvenate, and develop power. Entering trance states is in and of itself dangerous for the shaman’s soul who may have to do battle there. “Successful” cures often result in the shaman taking on the patient’s **illness** and **healing** it in his or her own body. Many **helping spirits** exact a heavy toll from the shaman for their services in **non-ordinary reality**. Shamans are often forced to observe

rigorous **taboos** in **diet**, behavior, and sexual practices to maintain their relationship with their helping spirits. A shaman who breaks a taboo, even unintentionally, may suddenly lose the power they have spent a lifetime cultivating.

Shamans are often required to sacrifice much of life that others take for granted. Jealous spirit “spouses” may prohibit marriage in **ordinary reality**. Women called into shamanism before childbearing may never be allowed to bear children. The strain of being available all day, every day, to people who are possessed and ill may be more than any non-shaman wants to deal with. The shaman’s relationship with the helping spirits may frighten the uninitiated. So, the shaman may not be able to find a mate even if the spirits allow it. The life of the shaman is one of profound personal sacrifice that may or may not be balanced by the moments of **ecstasy** that arise from a working relationship with spirit.

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Salasacan

The Salasacan people are **Quechua**-speaking Bolivians who were relocated in Ecuador. See also **cuy**.

San

A nomadic people of the Kalahari Desert, **Africa**, on the border of Botswana and Namibia in southern Africa. Men are hunters and women gather small animals and plants and report the signs and movement of game

to the men. Today only a few thousand of the estimated 62,000 San are of pure **blood** or follow their original way of life.

The San are the earliest **aboriginal** inhabitants of South Africa. Some are believed to have been there for 40,000 years. The San left paintings and engravings in the stone where they stopped to rest, live, and conduct **ritual**. Their paintings were made with natural dyes, like carbon iron oxide, and yellow ochre, mixed with blood or animal fat.

These rock paintings, some made at least 10,000 years ago, appear to document shamanic roots in what is now the great diversity of African spirituality. The paintings show **shamans**, "big shamans," individuals dancing ecstatically, and individuals in ecstatic **trance** states. The painting also show individuals in a trance state receiving **powers** to attract game, heal **illness**, and control the **weather**.

The San originally lived in the central plains as is evidenced in the paintings and carvings that remain. The San began to be pushed from these more desirable lands in 500 A.D. by the Nguni who migrated from the **north**. The San did not permanently leave the area for the Kalahari until after the arrival of the European settlers in the mid 19th century. See also **art**; **colors**; **Ju'hoansi**.

Sand Painting

Sand paintings, like those created by Navajo **shamans**, are **healing** tools. The paintings are made from colored sand and powders made from ground rocks and precious **metals**. Each grain of sand is charged with intention and **blessings** through the **ritual** process, then carefully put into place in the picture. These paintings are delicate and impermanent. Their **power** comes from the spirit **energy** that is called into the painting through the intention and focus of hours of painstaking creative work.

The shaman's sand paintings are spontaneous creations designed by **spirit** for that particular healing of that individual at that time. They are a type

of **medicine**. No two paintings are the same.

Sand paintings are generated from the unique perspective the **altered state of consciousness** gives the shaman on the **illness**, the patient, and the patient's relationship to the world and the spirit world. They are two-dimensional images of this multi-dimensional world perspective of an individual and his or her interconnectedness to all things. By creating a sand painting, the shaman is painting a picture of the healthy state of interconnecteness and drawing the individual into it.

Traditional sand paintings that are always exactly the same are also effective healing tools. They can be used as a **mandala**, for example, to focus meditation. The Gelupa monks who make the Kalachakra sand painting spend years memorizing texts and learning how to construct their traditional sand-painting exactly as the first painting was constructed. See also **colors**, **Dineh**, and **Iikhááh**.

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Sangoma

The *sangoma* (*isangoma*, *zangoma*) is one of three classes of traditional **Zulu** practitioners who each perform different functions of the **shaman**. The *sangoma* is responsible for the mastery of skills necessary to maintain a healthy relationship between the natural and supernatural realms for his or her community.

A *sangoma* works with the *Amadlozi*, or ancestral **spirits**, who are ever present; however an **altered state of consciousness** is usually necessary to communicate with them directly. *Umbilini* is the primal source of the *sangoma's* **power**. Through its arousal the *sangoma* enters the altered states necessary to

connect with the **ancestors** for **divination, diagnosis, and healing**.

The *sangoma* uses several methods to arouse the *umbilini*. Using drumming, the *sangoma* experiences the *umbilini* heating, rising up the spine, and bursting through the top of the head. In this aroused, energetic state, the *sangoma* is able to call upon the hidden powers of his or her **soul** to join with the great powers and **helping spirits** of the unseen world. Merged in this way, the *sangoma* draws **knowledge** from “the Hidden Lake,” a huge unseen lake in the spirit world where all the knowledge of the universe, past, present, and future, is found.

The *sangoma*’s knowledge and understanding must encompass the context, history, and mythological antecedents of his or her skills because true power resides in the universe as a whole, not in any single **ritual** or act of magical efficacy. Thus the *sangoma*’s awareness and concern is broader and deeper than that of the sorcerer. The sorcerer is merely a technician of magic who simply activates its force without awareness of or concern for the Whole.

When a *sangoma* disregards the whole and uses his or her skills to harm another, he or she becomes *umtagatin zulu allmaloy insone*, a doer of evil deeds and a sorcerer to be feared. Through knowledge of the universe and correct orientation within it, the *sangoma*’s power is exercised in a wholesome way. This way brings healing to the patient and to the world at the same time.

The Call—Ukutwasa

A *sangoma* is called to his or her profession by ancestral spirits. This experience is **Ukutwasa**, meaning coming out or emergence. This call often comes in a **dream** and manifests as an unexplained **illness** of the mind and body. This strange illness gradually progresses and remains untreatable by standard **medicine**. Characteristics of *Ukutwasa* include, but are not limited to; **visions**, both waking and sleeping, increased

ability to see future events or through physical objects, experiences of **dismemberment** by **animal spirits**, and a sense of the self (ego) shifting into something different.

When the individual recovers from *Ukutwasa* he or she is recognized as a **twasa**, (novice, **apprentice**) and is apprenticed to a *baba*, (*sangoma* **teacher**). The *twasa* begins a long period of **training** and personal **purification** while continuing to fulfill all responsibilities to family and community for an individual of the same age and **gender**.

The *sangoma*’s training is a highly ordered, strictly regulated, process. Candidates must work their way up through twelve stages, or ranks. In each stage they learn to work with one of twelve “vessels” or types of spirits. Few *sangoma* succeed in mastering the twelfth and final stage to become a High **sanusi**.

Gender

Traditionally the *sangoma* is a woman. However, there are male *sangoma*, many of whom are **gender variant** or **transformed shamans**. The important factor is that the individual is called, regardless of gender, by the spirits through *Ukutwasa*.

Training

During the first period of training, a *twasa* learns the *Umlando*, the tribal and community history, mythology, and ceremonies. He or she learns how to prepare herbal medicines and interpret dreams. In addition the *twasa* must begin an intense, ongoing process of deep, personal work focused on eliminating base feelings, like jealousy and anger, from within his or her self.

Each *twasa* must create his or her own *dingaka* set for divination. The *dingaka* come from the bones of the animals sacrificed for the feasts prepared to honor the *twasa*’s successful completion in an area or level of his or her training. After each feast the *twasa* searches through the **fire** for an

unbroken bone. The bone's are treated ceremonially, cleaned, and carved with sacred symbols. When the *twasa* has collected and decorated four *dingaka*, he or she can begin learning divination and diagnosis.

The *baba* teaches the *twasa* the techniques for using the full extent of his or her mental powers to enter **trance** and achieve union with the unseen world. The *twasa* learns to use drumming, meditation, proper breathing, and fasting as different means to summon and heat the *umbilini* and properly enter trance.

The *twasa* learns to use his or her trance states to diagnose illness, exorcise or remove *tokoloshe* (frightened ghosts), control the **weather**, and foretell the future. The *twasa* must also learn the techniques of counteracting *tagati*, the hexes placed on tribal members by witches or sorcerers.

The Ukukishwa Ceremony

Successful completion of a stage of training and **initiation** is honored with a feast during which a calf or goat is slaughtered. The sacrificial animal's *ena* (soul) is offered to the ancestral *enas* to strengthen the *twasa's* connection to the ancestors. The animal's bladder is worn on the *twasa's* head signifying the readiness of spirit to communicate through that individual. The *ukukishwa ceremony* is held when the apprenticeship is complete and the *twasa* is welcomed into the community as a *sangoma*.

Divination

The Zulu believe that the fact that an individual is ailing is evidence that the divine power of the universe has been misused. The *sangoma* must determine who (the client, someone else, or something else) has misused the power and how (counteract, uproot, avenge, or balance) to restore harmony to the universal energies involved.

Using **dingaka bones** for divination, the *sangoma* "throws the bones." Both *sangoma* and patient blow on the

dingaka, bringing the ancestral spirits of both people in to assist in the divination. Then the bones are thrown and their configuration interpreted by the *sangoma*. The *dingaka* are used to diagnose whether the illness or ailment is caused by witchcraft, **sorcery**, the presence of malevolent human or **nature spirits**, a broken **taboo**, loss of **energy**, or loss of a part of the patient's soul, the most serious condition.

Healing

After diagnosing the cause, the *sangoma* will throw the bones again to prescribe treatment. Treatments include purification rituals, **exorcism** or **extraction**, **soul retrieval**, **offerings**, healing ritual, massage, or medicines like tea, snuff, salve, poultice, emetics, or powders.

The *sangoma's* medicines have both medicinal and magical properties. A *sangoma* uses a variety of things; herbs, minerals, insects, bone fragments, **feathers**, roots, seeds, smoke, excreta, shells, and eggs, in their medicines and rituals.

Treating Physical Illness

The *sangoma* treats physical illnesses (headaches, heart **disease**, high blood pressure, etc.) with specific foods, life style changes, and psychological work. The Zulu believe the power of the human mind can harm or heal. By acknowledging the power of the patient's mind to harm himself through unexpressed thoughts and emotions, the *sangoma* works to balance these mental powers and restore internal harmony.

The *sangoma* also finds hidden objects, counters evil wishes against patients, and distinguishes between different types of "ghosts" to be exorcised. Some ghosts are gently persuaded to go where they will be more at home and no longer cause the humans discomfort. Noisy ghosts that throw things are expelled with more force by working with the humans they have attached themselves to.

Treating Mental Illness

In treating mental illness a *sangoma* distinguishes between three categories of madness; hopelessly mad, mad but able to be healed, and mad with *Ukutwasa*, which the individual must resolve for him/herself. *Sangoma* treat both the physical and mental aspects of mental illnesses with herbs, abstinence from particular substances, life style changes, and/or psychological work. Most remedies also involve some way of using the patient's visions, illusions, or hallucinations as a lever to bring the patient back to sanity. For this work the *sangoma* must know how to communicate with people who are in involuntary altered states.

First Contact

The *sangoma* learns the oral history of the most ancient ancestors who came from the stars. He or she is trained to be able to relate to extraterrestrial phenomenon. The *sangoma* learns what rituals to perform and how to properly communicate, depending upon which type of extraterrestrial lands and where the landing occurs. See also **Africa** and **iNyanga**.

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San Pedro

The San Pedro cactus, known as the Cactus of the Four Winds, grows in the temperate and warm zones of the central Andes of **South America** between 6,000 and 9,000 feet. It is used as a **sacred** hallucinogen by the indigenous peoples of Peru, who call it *Huachuma*, Bolivia where it is called *Achuma*, and Ecuador where it is called *Agua colla* and *Gigantón*. In contemporary Peru it is called San Pedro after St. Peter, whom the Christians believe holds the keys to heaven.

Trichocereus pachanoi is a branched, columnar cactus with six to eight ribs (often spineless) that can grow up to twenty feet in height. The fragrant buds bloom at night, revealing seven to nine inch, funnel-shaped flowers with white inner segments, brick red outer segments, and greenish stamen-filaments. *Trichocereus pachanoi* grows wild and is cultivated widely in Peru, Ecuador, and Bolivia.

The indigenous people of the Andes recognize several "kinds" of San Pedro, distinguished by the number of ribs. Cacti with seven ribs are the least potent and most common. Cacti with four ribs are rare, considered the most potent, and believed to have special **power** because each rib corresponds with one of the "four winds." The four winds and the four roads are supernatural powers associated with the four cardinal directions.

The use of *Huachuma* as an **entheogen** is one of the most ancient practices of the peoples of South America. There is archeological evidence that *Huachuma* was used by **shamans** more than 3,000 years ago in Peru. The association of *Huachuma* with the jaguar, anaconda, and **trance** states in South American art undoubtedly indicates that the cactus was used in ancient shamanic **rituals**. *Huachuma* is also associated in ancient art with the hummingbird, deer, and the sacred **spiral** of life, which are all symbols associated with the shaman and **shamanic healing** practices.

The ritual use of *Huachuma* was well established in the indigenous population of Peru when the Spanish arrived. The Spaniards, and the Roman Catholic Church in particular, were intolerant of these spiritual practices and suppressed the ritual use of *Huachuma*. The traditional practice was driven underground and the sacred role of San Pedro transformed.

The modern use of *Huachuma*, now called San Pedro, has been greatly influenced by Christianity. The spiritual center of the modern day San Pedro cult is

the highland town of Huancabamba. In the Andes above the town lies a series of sacred lagoons known as Las Huarinas which are renowned for their curative powers, and for being the home of the greatest *curanderos* and the a source of the most powerful **healing** plants.

Use

Traditionally the shaman, the patient, or both may drink *Huachum* during the healing ritual, which lasts through the night. The shaman uses *Huachum* to enter a trance state in which he or she can access the spirit world for **divination** and **diagnosis**. There are reports that *Huachum* enables the shaman to assume another's identity. The magic available through this sacred plant goes far beyond divination and curing.

The shaman's intention in giving San Pedro to the patient is to enable an opening of the heart and a blossoming of the patient, like the night flower of the cactus, into a higher state of **energy** and health. In the trance state patients are sometimes contemplative and introspective and sometimes quite wild, breaking into spontaneous **dance** or simply writhing on the ground. It is the shaman's role to facilitate the patient's revelations from these experiences.

In modern curing ceremonies San Pedro is used for divination and to heal sicknesses, like alcoholism and insanity, reverse hexes, counter **sorcery**, and assure future good fortune.

Preparation

The cactus stem is cut like bread into slices, approximately one half inch wide, and boiled for several hours. The resulting mash is strained for the juice. In this preparation San Pedro is taken alone. Often other plants, like *Datura*, are boiled separately and added to the drink, which is then called Cimora.

Some of the common admixtures are: *Brugmansia aurea* and *B. sanguinea*, Andean cactus (*Neoraimondia macrostibas*), *Iresine*, *Pedilanthus tithymaloides*, and *Isotoma longiflora*. Many of the common admixtures have psy-

choactive components themselves that greatly affect the potency of the drink and the nature of the trance state induced. On some occasions the magic needed demands additives other than plants, like ground bones or cemetery dust. This area of admixtures to San Pedro deserves further study.

Active Principle

The active principle in San Pedro is mescaline, which is responsible for the **visions** and **shapeshifting** qualities of the experience. The alkaloids 3,4-dimethoxyphenylethylamine and 3-methoxy-tryamine have been reported from the plant.

Ritual of Receiving the Plant Spirit, or Plant Medicine

In larger, communal curing sessions the focal point of the ritual in **ordinary reality** is the shaman's *mesa*, activated and displayed on the **altar**. The shaman and the participants drink San Pedro and enter **non-ordinary reality** through the induced trance state.

San Pedro is the principal **plant hallucinogen** in the high Andes. The cacti that grow near Las Huarinas are believed to have extraordinarily powerful properties for curing and protection. Shamans go annually to these sacred lagoons for **purification** and rejuvenation; the sick make pilgrimages to seek healing. Shamans from other regions work with the powerful shaman of Las Huarinas who can open up one's supernatural spiritual powers with the help of San Pedro.

Characteristics of the Induced Altered State

The onset of trance is marked by a dreamy state, drowsiness, or slight dizziness. As the visions begin and the trance state deepens, there is a numbness in the body followed by tranquillity. As the senses clear and release there is a sensation of detachment and a heightening of all the senses, including the telepathic sense of traveling across **time** and **space** and transforming shape and matter.

The primary characteristic of the trance state induced by San Pedro is **soul flight**. The ecstatic experience of the soul's movement in the spirit world was quite literal in the ancient *Huachuma* healing rituals. In contrast the modern ceremonies of the San Pedro cult tend toward work ceremonially with preparations of San Pedro diluted to the degree that soul flight is merely symbolic. See also **altered states of consciousness** and **Andes, South America**.

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Schultes, Richard Evans, Albert Hofmann, and Christian Rätsch. *Plants of the Gods: Their Sacred, Healing, and Hallucinogenic Powers*. Rochester, VT: Healing Arts Press, 2001.

Santo Daime

Santo Daime is a plant sacrament or **entheogen**. It is believed to be an experiential **vehicle** for the Divine Being that is present in all of creation. It is also known as *ayahuasca*.

Practitioners of the Santo Daime doctrine believe that the **spirit** of the rain forest sent Daime out into more mainstream Brazil because mankind had destroyed a large part of the forest and threatened to destroy what remains. They believe Daime can guide people to the light and truth through ecstatic trance states and can re-teach humans the **sacred** laws necessary for living in and with Nature.

The main **teacher** and guide is the Santo Daime itself, therefore, the Padrinho, or leader, serves more as an example or standard for students and initiates (*fardado*), those who have affirmed that Daime is their sacrament, guide, and Master Teacher. The Padrinho is usually in charge of the final steps in the preparation of Santo Daime when it "comes to life."

Santo Daime is prepared in a **ritual** process called *Feitio*, in which the men

prepare the *jagube*, *Banisteriopsis caapi* vine, and the women prepare the *rainha*, *Psychotria viridis* leaves. During the *Feitio* **silence**, concentration, and inner purity are required by everyone in the community.

The night-long ceremonies follow the calendar of the Catholic Church. After the participants drink the Daime, the hymns, instruments, and **dances** guide the **journeys**. Participants know that when they participate in a **ceremony** they are expected to use their trance state to work on themselves, to merge with the Divine, and to become a more perfect being. The concept of **healing** in the Santo Daime faith is holistic—body, mind, and spirit are healed in unity.

The Santo Daime doctrine was established by Raimundo Irineu Serra, an Afro-Brazilian rubber tapper who studied with Peruvian **shamans** during the 1920s. Serra was initiated into the process of making the sacred *ayahuasca*, journeying into the spirit world, interpreting his **visions**, and integrating them into his daily life.

In an *ayahuasca*-induced vision Serra was told to deepen his practice. He entered the rain forest, drinking only *ayahuasca* and eating only manioc for eight days. On the fourth day Our Lady of Conception the Forest Queen came to him in continuous visions and described to him the spiritual doctrine he was to go on to found. Drinking of *ayahuasca* was to be the central activity and sacrament of the ritual process.

In 1930 Serra founded Alto Santo church and began to receive the hymns, over 100 in all, that codified the foundations of the new doctrine. This doctrine is centered around the teachings of Christ and the collected hymnals are held to be the Third Testament, a revised and enlarged version of the Gospel of Christ.

Richman, G. D. "The Santo Daime Doctrine." *Shaman's Drum* 22 (Winter 1990–91):30–41.

Sanusi

The *sanusi* (master **shaman**) is the highest of three classes of traditional **Zulu** practitioners of the esoteric arts. The *sanusi*, *sangoma*, and *iNyanga* are all responsible for different aspects of maintaining a healthy relationship between the natural and supernatural realms for their community.

Traditionally, the *sanusi* are predominantly women. The *sanusi* has one foot in the spirit world and one in the physical world so that he can act as a conduit for spiritual realities. He or she is the uplifter of the people and a spiritual leader.

A *sanusi* is called to the role by the *Amadlozi*, the ancestral **spirits**. The role can not be inherited or chosen by the individual. *Ukutwasa*, **the call** from the spirits, often begins in a **dream** and progresses into an unexplained **illness** of the mind and body. This strange illness gradually progresses and remains untreatable by standard **medicine**, herbal remedies, or **sacrifices**.

The *sanusi* can be considered the most evolved and skilled *sangoma*. In **training** candidates must work their way up through twelve stages, or ranks. In each stage they learn to work with one of twelve "vessels" or types of spirits. Few *sangoma* succeed in mastering the twelfth and final stage to become a *sanusi*. This stage can only be reached with the help and **blessing** of the spirit world. See also **Africa**.

Mutwa, Credo Vusa'mazulu. *Song of the Stars: The Lore of a Zulu Shaman*. Barrytown, NY: Station Hill Openings, 1996.

Sauel

(Also *sauäl*, *sawal*.) Springs inhabited by **spirits**, which are considered power spots by the **Wintun**. They are visited, usually in the spring, by people who wish to gain **power** from the **spirit** of the *sauel*. Different *sauel* have different spirits and vary in the amount of power associated with them.

The most powerful *sauel* are visited only by **shamans** and are off limits to others. Less powerful *sauel* can be visited by anyone wishing to obtain **medicine** for gambling, hunting, warfare, invisibility, invulnerability, or love. **Offerings** are left at the *sauel* for the spirits, for example a common offering for **hunting medicine** is the afterbirth and the navel cord from newborn's birth.

Shamans and novices visit a *sauel* to acquire **helping spirits**, and therefore, power. A *sauel* is often associated with a particular **animal spirit**, e.g., Deer, Wolf, Coyote, Grizzly Bear, etc., who visits the shaman in his or her **dreams** or **visions** while at the *sauel*. Some *sauel* are restricted by gender as well as power. For example, the Coyote *sauel* is reserved for use by female shamans and novices only.

A *memtuli sauel*, or "**water-swimming sacred-places**," is a *sauel* with a pool. To gain power from the *memtuli sauel* the shaman dives to the bottom in an attempt to find a **charm** stone or other **power object** at the bottom of the pool. These sacred pools are also the place where the Wintun can safely discard shamanic regalia.

Lyon, William S. *Encyclopedia of Native American Shamanism: Sacred Ceremonies of North America*. Santa Barbara, CA: ABC-CLIO, 1998.

Sauyit

The *sauyit* is the *tungralik's* or shaman's **drum** in the **Alaskan** Arctic region. The drum is the core of the *tungralik's* practice and of the sacred **rituals** and ceremonies of the people. The *tungralik* plays the *sauyit* to induce **trance** or the assistant plays while the *tungralik* **sings** and beats a **rhythm** on the floor with a small baton.

The *sauyit* is an 18-inch, circular, wooden frame with a walrus or seal bladder stretched over it and held in place with a hide cord, or *oklinok*. The

sauyit is held aloft when played and beaten at the rim, not in the center of the drumhead. The beater, or *mumwa*, is a small stick adorned with a piece of white ermine or a fox tail. See also **aghula**; **Alaskan**; **angakok**; **Eskimo**; **sacred**.

Lyon, William S. *Encyclopedia of Native American Shamanism: Sacred Ceremonies of North America*. Santa Barbara, CA: ABC-CLIO, 1998.

Scapulimancy

A form of **divination** used to determine future events or to find lost persons. An animal bone, most often the scapula or shoulderblade, is held near enough to the **fire** to scorch it and then either the scorch marks or the fissures and lines created by the heat are read. This form of divination is practiced primarily in **North America** and Asia, which is believed to be the origin of scapulimancy. For example it is called *matinik-ashauew* among the Montagnais-Naskapi and *masinisawe* by the **Ojibwa**.

Lyon, William S. *Encyclopedia of Native American Shamanism: Sacred Ceremonies of North America*. Santa Barbara, CA: ABC-CLIO, 1998.

Scry

(Also skrie, skry.) Scrying is a form of **divination** in which the **seer** looks into a vessel of **water** with "second sight" to discover answers to questions. Often the seer covers his or her head and vessel with a cloth to better see beyond ordinary sight. Scrying is used in particular to see at a distance or into the future. The term is used generally to refer to any form of divination in which a container of water, a **crystal**, or an ordinary object like **mirrors**, tea leaves in a cup, a pool, or a well is used in divination.

Scrying is an ancient and widespread divination technique. It was

used by Celts, Saxons, and other early Europeans to see into the future. The scrying bowl was hung from three chains and filled with rainwater collected before it touched the **earth**. The Celts placed a small, model salmon in the bottom of the scrying bowl to connect the seer to that **sacred** keeper of **knowledge**.

Scrying in many forms is widespread in **North America**. The practice of scrying in **blood** and water has been found from the **Alaskan** north down into the Southwest. The **Ojibwa**, for example, scry by looking into a cup of water or into mirrors.

Cowan, Tom. *Fire in the Head: Shamanism and the Celtic Spirit*. San Francisco: HarperCollins, 1993.

Lyon, William S. *Encyclopedia of Native American Shamanism: Sacred Ceremonies of North America*. Santa Barbara, CA: ABC-CLIO, 1998.

Somé, M. P. *Of Water and the Spirit: Ritual, Magic and Initiation in the Life of an African Shaman*. New York: Penguin, 1995.

Sea Dyak

See **Iban Dyak**; **manang**; **manang bali**.

Sedna

Sedna is the Great Goddess and the **Mistress of the Beasts** of the peoples of the Arctic region. She is central to the *angakok's* (shaman's) ability to secure food for the community. The wild animals are Sedna's children, especially the seals, walruses, and whales. She gives her children to the hunters who honor their **souls** in appropriate **rituals** and withdraws them from those who show disrespect.

When the animals grow scarce the *angakok* must **journey** to the realm under the sea on behalf of the people to ask Sedna for more game. She is frightening and wild, wearing her long hair matted with the **blood** of all the animals the hunters have slain. Usually she is

angry that the people have broken **taboos**, both social and hunting, and dishonored the souls of her children. The *angakok* must first comb out her snarled hair and win her favor, asking what the people must confess and **sacrifice** to be worthy again of her children. In this way the *angakok* exchanges the sacrifice of the people for the souls of the animals the people need to survive.

Sedna is the goddess of destiny, death, and the afterlife. She oversees the three heavens of the **Eskimo**, including Omiktu, where the souls of humans and whales go after death. Thus the *angakok* meets Sedna's rule again when functioning as **psychopomp** and conveying the souls of the deceased to this **Land of the Dead** and when retrieving lost souls who have strayed to Omiktu.

Sedna was a girl who defied her father and married a sea-bird. As Sedna's irate father tried to take her home in a skin boat her irate bird husband created a storm. To save himself, Sedna's father threw her overboard to placate the **bird** and stop the storm. As Sedna clutched the gunwale to climb back in the boat, her father cut off the first joints of her fingers. They fell into the sea and became the whales, seals and walruses. Sedna continued to struggle and her father continued to cut until she had no fingers to hang on at all and she sunk to the bottom of the sea.

This is how Sedna got to her home at the bottom of the sea and why she is unable to comb her unruly hair. The broken taboos and evil deeds of people only dirty her hair and tangle it further, leaving her irate and angry with humankind. This is why the **shaman** must not only get to the bottom of the sea past Sedna's guards, but he must calm her anger and win her favor every time.

Sedna's companion in the watery Underworld is Qailertetang, the amazonian, **weather** goddess. Both goddesses are guardians of animals, hunters, fishermen, and **transformed**

shamans. In ritual they are represented in ways that blend **genders**. Particularly the gynandrous Qailertetang, who is represented in ritual by a man wearing a seal skin **mask** and the clothing of a woman. See also **Amazonia**.

Conner, Randy P. *Blossom of Bone: Reclaiming the Connections Between Homoeroticism and the Sacred*. San Francisco: HarperCollins, 1993.

Seer

A practitioner of **divination** who uses his or her skills to see at a distance and into the future or past. A seer is commonly called on to locate game, locate the enemy and warn of their movement, and to find lost objects or people. **Shamans** are seers, however not all seers are shamans. Seers who are not shamans are **clairvoyant**.

Sehrsartog

The *sehrsartog* is a **bullroarer** used by West Greenland **Eskimo** *angakut* (**shamans**). The *sehrsartog* was used during **healing** rituals; however exactly how is unclear. There is one report that a *sehrsartog* was whirled close to the patient's head to drive away the disease-causing spirit as part of the healing ritual. However, missionary efforts so effectively suppressed **shamanism** in this region that there are no clear accounts explaining how and why the *sehrsartog* was used in healing. See also **Greenland**.

Lyon, William S. *Encyclopedia of Native American Shamanism: Sacred Ceremonies of North America*. Santa Barbara, CA: ABC-CLIO, 1998.

Seidr

A Norse **ritual** for **divination** and prophecy performed by the *volva* (**seer** and **shaman**) to see into the future of people, **weather**, abundance of crops, etc. Originally the performance of the *seidr* was the secret art of the goddess Freyja.

The *volva* was seated and entered a **trance** state induced by the ecstatic singing of her chorus. The *volva*'s soul traveled to meet Freyja in the spirit world, merged with her, and returned to the ritual space with Freyja. With the goddess present in the space and speaking through the *volva*, the audience was allowed to ask the goddess questions.

Hoppál, M., and O. J. von Sadovsky. *Shamanism: Past and Present* (Vol. 1 & 2). Fullerton, CA: International Society for Trans-Oceanic Research, 1989.

Høst, A. *Learning to Ride the Waves*. København: Scandinavian Center for Shamanic Studies, 1991.

Semen and Water

Cross-culturally, semen and water are often associated in mythology. For example, the **Shuar** tell stories of young women who are impregnated while swimming in the river and later gave birth to mixed, human-spirit children. Conversely, the Sumerian god Enki, brought forth new life to the barren country of Sumer by allowing his semen to flow throughout the land.

Linguistic evidences shows that early humankind viewed **water** as a life-inducing, fertilizing fluid of conception, much like semen. The ancient Sumerian symbol for water also represented sperm, conception, and generation. Water symbolized the source of all things and was believed to harbor all potentiality for life and regeneration.

Much of the water supplies of the **earth** was more semen-like, unclear, muddy, and filled with organic matter, bacteria, and viruses. Much like semen carrying DNA, these waterways also carried information. Physically, water carried people, goods, and their messages. Internally, it carried other life-forms from animals to viruses. Spiritually, it carried the **animal spirits** and the messages of the living upstream (or downstream depending on the **culture**) to the **Ancestors** now residing at

the Source. The association of semen and water as carriers of the information necessary for life to flourish is ancient.

Clear water, on the other hand, was held **sacred** for different reasons. It embodies the **spirit** of water that brings **purification, cleansing**, restoration, and reconciliation. Freshwater springs were often considered sacred sites, or power spots, and used differently than muddy, flowing water. Through clear water people connected to the spirit of water as an essential element (one of four or five) and a direct connection to the Source of All Things.

Conner, Randy P. *Blossom of Bone: Reclaiming the Connections Between Homoeroticism and the Sacred*. San Francisco: HarperCollins, 1993.

Redmond, L. *When the Drummers Were Women: A Spiritual History of Rhythm*. New York: Three Rivers Press, 1997.

Semen of the Sun

Epená is an hallucinogenic snuff made from the inner bark of several species of *Virola*. For the **shaman**, it is a powerful tool for **diagnosis** and treatment of **illness**. *Epená* is an important **vehicle** of communication with the **spirit** world for many tribes in northwest **Amazonia**.

The Tukano people call *epená*, **viho**, or "Semen of the Sun." They explain that in the beginning of time Father **Sun** was having sex with his daughter. She scratched his penis and thus acquired *viho* for the Tukano. In this way the **sacred** snuff came from the Sun's semen and continues to be kept in containers called *muhipu-nuri*, or "penis of the sun."

The Tukano shaman is not allowed to communicate directly with the **spirit** world. In an *epená*-induced **trance** state the shaman communicates with *Viho-mahse*, the "snuff-person" who lives in the Milky Way and attends to all human affairs. Then through *Viho-mahse* the shaman is able to communicate with the spirit world.

Seneca

One of the original five nations of the **Iroquois** who lived in the northeastern region of **North America** near the Great Lakes. The original medicine society of the Seneca was the **Hadigonsashoon**, the **False Face Society** from which all other Seneca **medicine societies** emerged.

The medicine societies performed curing **rituals** for illnesses and injuries whose origins were not obvious and physical, and therefore easily handled by the medicine people with plant remedies. When the cause of an **illness** could not be identified by the medicine people, the relatives of the patient consulted a **clairvoyant** or **seer**. The seer performed a **divination** to determine the cause of the illness and the **healing** ritual(s) necessary for a cure.

For serious cases several performances of the ritual might be necessary or the performance of several different rituals. However, these rituals failed to cure the patient, a **shaman** who could reverse the affects of **sorcery**, or **witch doctor**, was called on as a last resort.

To perform a medicine society ritual was to honor and apply the highest spiritual mysteries of the people. The societies performed their rituals continuously; however, after the coming of the white man, they found it expedient to do so secretly. The leaders of the same societies conferred to keep their rituals uniform from tribe to tribe.

There were no restrictions placed on membership, except the men who assist the Women's Society. Candidates could join any society regardless of clan and were often invited to join a society after being cured by their medicine ritual.

The Seneca medicine societies are ancient. Their rituals have been transmitted by **song** with little change for many, many years. Each society has a legend of a founding hero that explains its origin and ritual practices. In general, the theme is the same in each society. The founder has a great adventure, with many trials that he or she could

not have prevailed over had the animals or **spirits** not come to his or her aid. The hero then returns to the people to teach them the secrets learned from the animals and the rituals necessary to gain their favor and therefore their **power**. These secrets were preserved by the society founded by the hero.

The traditional Seneca Medicine Societies included several societies, described as follows.

The Little Water Society

The Little Water Society was organized to perform the rites necessary to preserve the potency of the secret **medicine** known as the little water powder. This medicine is sung for and empowered in this society's rituals; it is not used in them. The empowered powder is stored for use by medicine people in healing ceremonies. Both men and women are members of this society.

The Pygmy Society

The rituals of the Pygmy Society are primarily to honor and communicate with the little folk, whose goodwill is sought by all native people. Translated as pygmy, these **spirit** beings are more like elves or small forest folk whom the Seneca believe are "next to the people" in importance and are therefore very powerful beings. These beings demand proper attention and punish those who neglect them.

There are many other spirit and magic animals, called *ho'tcine'gada*, of this society. In addition to the elves, the *ho'tcine'gada* include: Great Horned Serpent, Blue Panther, Exploding Wren, White Beaver, Corn-bug, Sharp-legs, Little Dry Hand, Wind Spirit, and Great Naked Bear. Members of this society keep **charms** of the *ho'tcine'gada*, some made from body parts of the animals.

The Dark Dance Ritual is designed to appease a *ho'tcine'gada* or to procure its power and **blessings**. This ritual is performed at any time for the purpose of appeasing the spirit of a charm that has or will become impotent. Non-members may call for the ritual when they

are troubled by certain sights and **sounds** that imply that a *ho'tcine'gada* is not pleased.

This society **sings** for all the medicine charms and all the magic animals. Some of the Seneca charms embody malevolent energies that bring harm or misfortune to their caretakers. However, they must not be destroyed under any circumstances. The harmful effects of these charms can be warded off by the rituals of this society. Most charms are only for benevolent purposes, but they can become angry and then harmful if neglected.

The Otter Society

The Otter Society is a women's society organized to honor and appease the otters and other **water** animals whose spirits influence the good health, fortunes, and destinies of humans. The Otter Society has no songs or **dances**. Its members preserve and perform the teachings of how to give thanks to the water animals, to retain their favor, and to cure illnesses brought on by transgressions against the water animals. In these healing rituals the members go to a spring and conduct a **ceremony** to gather **sacred** healing water. They then go to the patient's lodge and sprinkle him with the sacred water while affecting the cure.

The Medicine Animal Society

The members of the Medicine Animal (or Mystic Animal) Society preserve and perform the rituals necessary to maintain the good will of the "medicine" animals, the animals who joined with humans in ancient times to be of service to mankind. The powers of the medicine animals cure illness, relieve pain, avert disasters in Nature, and reestablish good fortune. These animals taught humans the rituals necessary to honor and please them so that they will continue to be of service to humankind. These rituals are kept strictly secret.

Each member receives a **power song** from spirit and a gourd **rattle** during their initiation into the society. During

their rituals the members chant and dance while the shaman performs displays of power like, **mastery of fire**, animating inanimate objects, and seeing with "spirit eyes" through wooden **masks** that have no eyeholes. The rituals of this society are prescribed to treat fevers and skin diseases.

There are three masks used by the Medicine Animal Society in their rituals: the Conjurer's mask, the Witch mask, and the Dual-spirit's mask. These masks are made without metal eyes and are never used in the rites of the False Face Society.

The Eagle Society

The Eagle Society's ritual is considered the most sacred. Its songs are believed to be the most potent charms known to the Seneca. The Dew Eagle, also known as the "reviver of wilting things," or **oshadageaa**, is called upon in this ritual to restore the life force to the dying, the elderly, and those afflicted with wasting diseases.

Membership in the Eagle Society is limited to those who received specific **dreams** involving the Dew Eagle or who are healed by the rituals of the society. Members wear special **costumes** in the rituals, which involve singers and selected dancers. Those who dance assume a squatting position and dance like **birds** to induce a full **possession** trance by the Dew Eagle.

The Bear Society

The Bear Society's rituals employ dancing and chanting to cure the diseases of its members and candidates. The ceremony is particularly effective in curing fevers, rheumatism, and in bringing good fortune. The highest officer of this society is a woman who functions as the shaman in the healing rituals blowing the healing power of Bear into the head of the patient. The Bear Society uses the water-**drum** and horn rattles during their rituals.

The Buffalo Society

The rituals of the Buffalo Society involve many songs and dances accompanied by the water-drum and horn

rattles. When the ritual is complete, a buffalo pudding is taken home by the members. When eaten the pudding acts as a charm, "stamping off" illness and misfortune.

Chanter for the Dead

The Feast of the Dead, performed by this society, is called for when a member dreams of the restless spirits of deceased members, relatives, or friends. The ritual is led by its highest official who is always a woman. The large water-drum is played to accompany a specific set of songs and then the participants feast. The food is shared in a ritualized way to satisfy the hungry ghosts, who have become **earth** bound. The diviner of this society identifies the spirit who is troubling the dreams of the member. Any sickness or misfortune caused by the ghosts is dispelled by the healing forces of the ceremony.

The Women's Society

The Women's Society exists to preserve the rituals through which good fortune and health are obtained and maintained for women. The fourteen singers of this society are all men. During this ritual the men sing and are accompanied by the water-drum and horn rattles. The women dance and join in chorus of the songs.

Sisters of the Dio'he'ko

The duty of the all female members of this society is to preserve and perform the special **offering** of thanks to the *Dio'he'ko*, "these sustain our lives," the spirits of corn, beans, and squashes. These rituals of thanksgiving honor and satisfy the spirits of growth that assure a good harvest and, by extension, the life of the people. The special rattle of this society is made from the shell of a land tortoise.

The False Face Society

The False Face Society, the eldest of the medicine societies, has three divisions and uses four classes of masks: the doorkeeper or doctor masks, dancing masks, beggar masks, and secret masks.

The beggar and thief masks are not part of the **paraphernalia** of the true society. The secret masks are only used in society rituals, not open to the public, performed as part of the midwinter ceremony. All of the masks have names.

The paraphernalia of this society consists of the false face masks, rattles made from the shells of snapping turtles, hickory bark rattles, head throws, and **tobacco** baskets. The leader's pole has fastened to it a small husk face mask, a small wooden false face mask, and a small turtle rattle.

The Husk Face Society:

The Husk Face Society members are water doctors who endeavor to cure certain diseases by spraying and sprinkling water on the patients during their healing rituals. The members wear carved, wooden masks, different from those of the False Face Society. During the rituals the doctors receive the power to heal from the spirit energies embodied in the masks. See also **power displays** and **trance**.

Kalweit, Holger. *Dreamtime and Inner Space: The World of the Shaman*. Boston: Shambhala Publications, 1988.

Parker, A. C. "Secret Medicine Societies of the Seneca." *American Anthropologist* 11, no. 2 (1909): 161–185.

Serrat

Serrat is the West Greenland **Eskimo** term for **spells** used by *angakok* (**shamans**), *qanimasok* (sorcerers), and *serrasoq* (witches). *Serrat* are sayings with magical influence that can be general in nature or addressed to an individual owner. They are things of value and are passed on through inheritance. See also **Greenland** and **sorcery**.

Lyon, William S. *Encyclopedia of Native American Shamanism: Sacred Ceremonies of North America*. Santa Barbara, CA: ABC-CLIO, 1998.

Set and Setting

“Set and setting” is a commonly used phrase in discussions of psychoactive substances, like the plant **entheogens** used by **shamans** in many **cultures**. Set refers to the psychological makeup of the individual taking the psychoactive substance. Setting refers to social and physical environment in which the psychoactive substances is taken.

Set and setting are two of three primary factors that influence the hallucinogenic experience, from the perspective of contemporary western researchers. The third factor is the pharmacological effects of the substance. Together these three factors influence the psychedelic experience such that the same psychoactive substances can produce varied responses.

Shadow

The Shadow is a psychological aspect of the self that has been disowned or judged unworthy of being an active part in the individual's conscious life. Any aspect of the self, even a positive or powerful aspect, that is disowned and unintegrated as part of the whole self is relegated to the Shadow. These Shadow aspects invent ways to remind the individual that they are still there. When an individual is able to accept a Shadow aspect and re-integrate it, that aspect moves from the Shadow back into the conscious self.

The process of disowning aspects of the self creates holes or openings in an individual's **energy**. These openings allow intrusive energies and the malevolent energies sent by sorcerers to enter the body. Once in the body these energies can create physical and mental **illness**. **Shamans** perform **extraction** healing **rituals** to remove these energies from the body. See also **healing**.

Shaking Tent Ceremony

(Also Conjuring Ceremony or Jugglery.)
A version of the **spirit intrusions** ritual widely used across the northeastern

woodlands, Plains, and Plateau regions of **North America** by **shamans** and **seers** for **divination**, information, **diagnosis**, and to a lesser extent **healing**. A special cylindrical tent, the **djesikon**, is built for the **ritual**. The name is derived from the characteristic shaking of the **djesikon** that occurs when the spirit **powers** arrive and exit during the ritual.

The **djessakid**, the shaman who performs this ritual, learns the skill from the **manitou** or helping spirit. The power to perform the ritual is given in a **dream** or **vision** by the **manitou** and then cultivated over time. This ritual requires levels of power and skill that can only be mastered by shamans with a great deal of personal power and maturity as well as a strong working relationship with powerful **manitou**.

The ritual is performed sparingly because the **energy** expenditure necessary depletes the shaman; however several questions can be asked in one ritual. The ritual is used for diagnosis and divining cures for **illness**, seeing the future or the movement of enemies, locating game and lost objects, and communicating with the deceased. In particular the ritual is used to capture the **free soul** of a sorcerer and to force that sorcerer to cease all malevolent acts causing illness, death, and injury to others.

The shaman and assistants prepare for the ritual with a sweat for **purification** and to strengthen their relationships with their **manitou**. The assistants then construct the **djesikon** as instructed by **spirit** in the shaman's visions. The ritual usually proceeds at night.

The shaman begins **singing** as he approaches the lodge. The shaman's **power songs** are used to induce **trance** and call the **helping spirits** to enter the lodge with the shaman. In some versions of the ritual the shaman is bound wrists and ankles with a chord or wrapped in a skin from head to toe and bound securely and then carried into the lodge. In most cases the tent begins shaking as the shaman enters, and

continues to do so quite violently indicating that the **spirits** are arriving and present. When the shaman is deep in trance and the tent is shaking violently the members of the audience put forth questions to the helping spirits.

Depending on the shaman and/or cultural expectations the spirits answer in a variety of ways. Some shamans simply translate while others speak in a **shamanic language** that must be interpreted by an assistant. The communication of some spirits is heard as whistles or other **sounds** while other spirits are heard speaking in voices. Some shamans work with **Mikenak**, Turtle spirit, who works as a mediator, taking the question from the shaman to the spirits and returning to the shaman with the answer.

When the ritual is complete, the shaman returns to **ordinary consciousness** free of his bonds. The magical liberation of the shaman is considered proof of the presence of spirit in the *djesikon* and one of many **power displays** associated with this divination ritual. See also **language**; **Mishikan**; **Ojibwa**; **Spirit Lodge**.

Hultkrantz, A. "Spirit Lodge, a North American Shamanistic Séance." In *Studies in Shamanism*. Stockholm: Almqvist and Wiksell, 1962.

Lyon, William S. *Encyclopedia of Native American Healing*. New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 1996.

Shaltu

A **Wintun** term for a shaman's **helping spirit**. *Shaltu* is also used to refer to the performers in **dance** rituals who dance in **trance** states in which they have embodied their helping spirit. See also **embodiment**; **ritual**; **spirit**.

Lyon, William S. *Encyclopedia of Native American Shamanism: Sacred Ceremonies of North America*. Santa Barbara, CA: ABC-CLIO, 1998.

Shaman

The shaman is a practitioner who has developed the mastery of:

1. accessing altered (alternate) states of consciousness, control of themselves while moving in those states, and returning to an ordinary state of consciousness at will and,
2. mediation between the needs of the spirit world and the those of the physical world in a way that can be understood by the community, and whose mastery of the above is used,
3. to serve the needs of the community which cannot be met by practitioners of other disciplines, like: physicians, psychiatrists, **priests**, leaders, etc.

This means that the shaman is a specific type of healer who uses a **trance** state, or **alternate state of consciousness**, to enter the invisible world (all aspects of our world that affect us which we can not see, including the spiritual, emotional, mental, mythical, archetypal, and **dream** worlds). Once in the invisible world the shaman makes a change in the **energy** found there in such a way that it directly affects the need (**healing**, **hunting magic**, **weather**, etc.) here in the physical world. Furthermore, the shaman learns what to do (what energy to change and how to change it) in the invisible world through direct contact with "**spirits**." Spirits are energies with presence found in the invisible world. They may have form (animal, plant, mountain, **ancestor**, deity, element, etc.); they may be formless; or the **spirit** may be the presence of the universe as a being, often explained as That Which Created God. It is this direct contact with spirit and the use of the trance state that distinguishes the shaman from other practitioners. See also **altered states of consciousness**; **animal spirits**; **elements**; **non-ordinary reality**; **ordinary consciousness**; **plant spirits**.

Eliade, Mircea. *Shamanism: Archaic Techniques of Ecstasy*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1964.

- Harner, Michael J. *The Way of the Shaman*. San Francisco: Harper-Collins, 1990.
- Heinze, R. I. *Shamans of the 20th Century*. New York: Irvington Publishers, Inc., 1991.
- Peters, L. G., and D. Price-Williams. "Towards an Experimental Analysis of Shamanism." *American Ethnologist* 7, no. 3 (1980): 397–413.

Shamanic Altered States of Consciousness

Altered states of consciousness are mental states which can be subjectively recognized as representing a difference in psychological functioning from the individual's day-to-day, alert waking state. Altered states of consciousness are the tools of the shaman's profession. What separates the altered states necessary for shamanic work from mental and spiritual **illness** is the intention, discipline, and concentration of the **shaman**.

Shamanic altered states of consciousness are a diverse range of states used by the shaman to perform the tasks of his or her profession. In altered states the invisible world of **spirit** becomes visible, allowing the shaman to communicate with **helping spirits** and to see the true source of the patient's problem. The shaman's experience of these **trance** states is often ecstatic, though the state remains controlled and intentional.

The shaman's ability to help a person to heal or to influence **weather**, game, or crops arises from his or her relationship with spirit. To exercise this relationship the shaman must alter his or her state of consciousness to connect and communicate with the spirit or sacred **energy** being called upon.

To establish a rapport with spirit the shaman will **journey** (intentional **soul flight**) or enter an **embodiment** trance, (intentional spirit **possession**). Practitioners caution against viewing the shaman's altered state as exclusive to either type of trance. The type of

trance used by a shaman has a great deal to do with what the shaman is trying to accomplish through the trance. Any definition of the shaman's trance must include both spirit flight and spirit embodiment, the full range of altered states between, and the understanding that these trance states can exist separately or coexist to various degrees throughout a **shamanic healing** ritual.

In his work mapping altered states, Roger Walsh, MD., Ph.D., professor, and author of numerous books and papers on **shamanism**, has shown that there is not one single altered state of consciousness sought by shamans, but many. Generally speaking there are three major classes of shamanic altered states of consciousness: embodiment, drug-induced journey, and journey induced by other means. While there may be significant functional overlap between these classes, there is no reason to assume that they comprise a single state. Furthermore, considerable variation may occur within each class, therefore it would be an oversimplification even to consider each class a single state of consciousness.

Shamanic altered states are often compared to the altered states achieved through other disciplines such as Buddhist meditation and yoga. There are some significant similarities: the ability to enter and exit at will, heightened concentration, initially negative experiences resolved into increasingly positive experiences, and a shift of identity from ego/body self. However, there are enough significant differences: the awareness of environment, ability to communicate, types and degree of concentration, control over content and experience, arousal, sense of self, affect, experience of the body, and content, that the states cannot be considered the same.

The altered state used by the shaman varies between **cultures**, shamans, and clients. Looking at **diagnosis** alone there are a variety of altered states and corresponding techniques. For example, using a **tsentsak** (invisible

dart) with *ayahuasca*, watching a candle rubbed on the client's body burn, reading guinea pig innards, soul flight, or traveling somewhere between **ordinary reality** and the spirit realm. The altered state used depends on **training**, personal preference, illness, mastery, and/or cultural expectation. See also **divination**; **healing**; **magical darts**.

Eliade, Mircea. *Shamanism: Archaic Techniques of Ecstasy*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1964.

Harner, Michael J. *The Way of the Shaman*. San Francisco: Harper-Collins, 1990.

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Peters, L. G. "Shamanism: Phenomenology of a Spiritual Discipline." *Journal of Transpersonal Psychology* 21, no. 2 (1989): 115–137.

Walsh, Roger. "Phenomenological Mapping: A Method for Describing and Comparing States of Consciousness." *Journal of Transpersonal Psychology* 27, no. 1 (1995): 25–56.

Shamanic Counseling

Shamanic counseling is an experiential counseling method designed to facilitate the psychological and emotional **healing** of individuals and communities. This method was designed by Michael Harner, the founder and director of the **Foundation for Shamanic Studies**.

Shamanic counseling is based on the discipline of journeying into the invisible world to the **sound** of a monotonous drumbeat. Unlike **shamanic healing** where the **shaman** journeys on the client's behalf, in shamanic counseling the client **journeys** on his or her own behalf. The client's **helping spirits** are the "counselors" to whom the client goes for healing and guidance. The shamanic counselor teaches the journeying technique and serves the client as a resource in using the technique to

facilitate the desired psychological and emotional healing.

Shamanic Healing

At the most essential level shamanic healing involves the movement of energies from a patient, or group, out into the spirit world or from the spirit world into the patient. This movement of **energy** occurs in the context of the shaman's **healing** ritual. The principles of shamanic healing are unchanging. The techniques change to some degree from **culture** to culture. The content changes from situation to situation based on the patient and the kind of energies being moved.

There are two aspects of shamanic healing that are similar in all sessions. First, the **shaman** enters a **trance** state, either **soul flight** or spirit **embodiment**, which allows him/her to become an energetic bridge between the patient and the invisible world. Secondly, the shaman moves energy across that bridge. From the shaman's perspective there are energies out in the spirit world that belong in the patient's energy body and energies in the patient's energy body that belong out in the spirit world. A typical healing session focuses on one primary problem and involves some additional movement of energies, both in and out of the patient.

The type of trance used by the shaman is determined by what needs to be done in the healing **ritual**. The techniques necessary for a particular healing depend on the **diagnosis** of where the source of the problem lies, the true nature of the energies involved, and what to do about those energies. This is determined by the shaman through **divination**.

There are different names for the different kinds of shamanic healing because there are different kinds of energy that need to be moved. For example, removing an **energy intrusion** from a patient is an **extraction**, while removing a harmful spirit from a patient is a depossession, or **exorcism**.

In a divination the shaman retrieves information from the spirit world for the patient or group. In **power retrievals** or **blessings** the shaman retrieves **powers** or energies from the spirit world for the patient. In a **soul retrieval** the shaman retrieves lost **soul** parts from the spirit world for the patient. In a **cleansing** the shaman removes non-localized energies from a body or a **space**. In an extraction the shaman removes localized energy intrusions from the body of the patient. In a depossession or exorcism the shaman removes a spirit intrusion from the body of the patient.

Shamans work on at least five different levels simultaneously in healing rituals. These five levels are:

1. the physical-biological,
2. the emotional-psychological,
3. the mental-philosophical-moral,
4. the social-ethical, and
5. the spiritual.

For example, in a soul retrieval healing ritual as soon as the shaman has returned the lost soul part to the client, the source of problem is resolved on a spiritual level. The shaman then facilitates any physical-biological changes that result from the soul part's return to the body. Finally, the shaman works with the client to establish a new equilibrium in and between the emotional-psychological, mental, and social levels.

The shaman is able to work on multiple levels simultaneously because he or she is aided by spirit. When in his or her working trance state, the shaman is guided in what to do directly by the **helping spirits** of the energy of the altered state, as with the *num* energy that guides the **!Kung** healers. Therefore every healing ritual is improvised, created on the spot from the needs of the patient, the abilities of the shaman, and the intervention of spirit.

During healing rituals shamans often retrieve lost souls, communicate with **spirits**, repair the interconnectedness of their patients with his or her community or with the **earth**, facilitate spiritual **purification**, interpret **dreams**

and **visions**, and stress the importance of spiritual growth, life purpose, and being of service to humanity and to Nature.

The first act in any healing session is the diagnosis, or divination. From there the shaman may move into another type of healing like soul retrieval, power retrieval, extraction, or cleansing. If not done, the shaman remains in the act of divination and retrieves information, describing remedies, healing rituals, preparation for those rituals, the true spirit source of the presenting problem, how to restore harmony to all the energies involved, or the need for the patient to go to an allopathic doctor or another type of healer.

The structural principles of shamanic healing rituals are cross-culturally consistent. The healing **ritual structure** is simplified as follows:

1. The shaman opens the ritual space and enters his or her trance, which is necessary for healing. The trance is either a journeying state or spirit embodiment.
2. Diagnosis of the true source of the **illness** /problem is determined by spirit and involves both ordinary and non-ordinary reality factors.
3. Action is taken by the shaman, as the **vehicle** for the helping spirits, and energies are moved.
4. Gratitude and thanks are given to helping spirits and the ritual space is closed.

How these steps are carried out varies relative to culture, the skills of the practitioner, the healing needed, and the directions offered by the helping spirits. For example, an extraction by a **Shuar** shaman will involve using *aya-huasca*, a **plant hallucinogen**, to enter trance and a *tsentsak*, invisible dart, to remove the energy intrusion. An extraction by a Pomo shaman would involve **singing** and dancing into trance and sucking to remove the energy intrusion. Though these two healing rituals look different, they each involve the same steps in a ritual process that results in the same type of healing, an extraction.

Contemporary shamans are often called upon for an additional step in the healing ritual to compensate for the lack of community support for shamanic healing. After the ritual is complete the shaman helps the client integrate the healing experience into a new sense of self and to reintegrate that sense of self into his or her daily life.

Shamanic healing also involves work with the souls of the dying and the **spirits of the dead**. It is the shaman's task as **psychopomp** to escort the soul on its **journey** to the **Land of the Dead**. To complete its dying process a soul must be resolved with its entire life and free of emotional attachments to that life and the physical plane. The shaman may have to assist in the healing necessary for this detachment even at death's door.

By altering reality within the healing ritual, shamans create an opportunity for participants in that ritual to experience the Divine, to become One-with-all-things. This experience of ecstatic union is in and of itself a healing experience. By practicing and sharing the **sacred technologies** of ecstatic altered states, shamans maintain the possibility for humanity's healing and evolution of conscious well-being. See also **altered states of consciousness; dance; death and dying; magical darts; soul loss**.

Heinze, R. I. *Shamans of the 20th Century*. New York: Irvington Publishers, Inc., 1991.

Somé, M.P. *Ritual: Power, Healing, and Community*. New York: Viking Penguin, 1997.

Wolf, F. A. *The Eagle's Quest: A Physicist Finds the Scientific Truth at the Heart of the Shamanic World*. New York: Touchstone Press, 1992.

Shamanic State of Consciousness

The Shamanic State of Consciousness (SSC) is a term used by Michael Harner, founder and director of the **Foundation for Shamanic Studies**, to refer to the **altered state of consciousness** and the

learned perspective that characterizes shamanic work. "The SSC involves not only a '**trance**' or transcendent state of awareness, but also a learned awareness of shamanic methods and assumptions while in such an altered state."

The learned component of the SSC includes:

1. Information about the cosmic geography of the invisible world of **spirit**, or non-ordinary reality.
2. An awareness by the **shaman** that he or she must have a specific intended mission while in the SSC and the ability to hold the focus of that mission.
3. The basic methods for accomplishing the work of the shaman while in the SSC.
4. The ability to retain the information for the patient until the shaman's return to the physical world and to communicate that information clearly and completely.
5. The ability to maintain conscious control over the direction of his or her travels in the **journey**, without knowing what he or she will discover on that journey.
6. The ability to bring back his or her discoveries to help others and to build a body of knowledge about the invisible world, its geography, and the beings that inhabit it.

The SSC described above refers primarily to the shaman working in the altered state referred to as a journey or spirit flight. The journey and the **embodiment** trance are the two poles of a continuum of altered states used by the shaman.

Harner, Michael J. *The Way of the Shaman*. San Francisco: Harper-Collins, 1990.

Shamanic Symbols

Much of the **art** created by **shamans** is intended to communicate complex ideas through symbolic shorthand. These shamanic symbols create visual links that activate the **energy** and **power**

contained in the more complex ideas which are derived from the shaman's experiential **knowledge** of the true nature of the visible and invisible worlds. The foundation of this knowledge is the understanding that all things are connected and interrelated all the way back to the beginning of the Universe.

Listed below are reoccurring, cross-cultural symbols that represent essential aspects of a shamanic worldview. They remain in our human **psyche** today as universal, archetypal symbols.

The Tree of Life (The World Tree)

The **Tree of Life** is a cross-culturally recurrent symbol for the opening and connection between the realms of the physical and the spirit world. The Tree of Life is used by the shaman and the **helping spirits** as the way to move between the realms. The branches provide a means to climb to the **Upperworld** and the roots a means to reach the **Lowerworld**. The Tree of Life is also known as the **World Tree**, **World Axis**, Great Tree, or **Cosmic Tree**.

The trunk of the Tree of Life is the axis (*axis mundi*) running through the Center of the World. Pillars, poles, large stone monoliths, mountains, or temples built like mountains are also symbolic of the Tree of Life. This symbolism can be recognized by the presence of seven notches or rungs, representing the seven layers of the Upperworld. In many **cultures** a particular type of tree is considered the Tree of Life, for example, the birch for the **Tungus** or the **sycamore fig** for ancient Egyptians.

Spiral of Creation

The Spiral of Creation represents the original emanations of life from the Void. The Spiral is the as yet unknown potential, alive and pulsing between occurring and reoccurring. The Spiral of Creation is recorded in the stone and clay remnants of the **symbolic languages** of people on every continent.

The Spiral of Creation is the interrelationship of **space** and **time**. It winds

simultaneously upwards and downwards. The **spiral** exists in such a way that any one point can touch any other point at any time. It represents the infinite, simultaneous possibilities within the **Kosmos**.

The Circle

Time is represented in the **circle**, whose deceptive simplicity is symbolic of a much more complex relationship with time. The shaman experiences time as the simultaneous, creative expression of all that is, that was, and all that will be. Some shamanic cultures, like the **Dagara** of West Africa, have no concept for linear time at all. They are aware of linear time as an illusion accepted because we do not know time as it really exists. The shaman uses timing to move in harmony with the Whole and in synch with the **rhythms** of Nature and the Universe.

The Circled Cross

The Circled Cross is a shorthand symbol of the shaman's universe and is found in cultures as distant and unrelated as the Celts of the British Isles and the **Mapuche** of Chile, **South America**. The circle aspect represents both the circle of time and a foreshortened view of the Spiral of Creation. The crossed lines represent the four directions of the physical world and the movement of the shaman out into the other dimensions of the spirit world. The center point where the lines cross is the Tree of Life, the central axis from which the shaman can move in all directions in an infinite universe. This basic pattern of two crossed lines enclosed in a circle appears carved on stones, worked into jewelry, and painted on **cave** walls throughout the world.

Center of the World

The Center of the World is the *axis mundi*, an existential place or point where the **sacred** manifests in space and the **dream** unfolds, bringing the world into existence. The axis mundi joins the diametrically opposite forces of the universe as One. Creation and

entropy, the essential generative and destructive forces of the universe, exist simultaneously, mirror images of each other together within the **Great Mystery**.

The Center of the World is not just a metaphor for the shaman but an actual place. Shamans move through this place in **altered states of consciousness** to connect with all the other dimensions of the Otherworld.

Ascent and Descent

Themes of ascent and descent in stories and **myths** are symbolic of entering and traveling through the spirit realms. While the symbolism is important for all people, the means of ascent and descent are real and literal for the shaman. Movement in the spirit world and between the realms is essential for the shaman's work.

Different means of ascent provide access to the Upperworld. Common symbols of ascent are **trees**, poles, **ladders**, stairs, rainbows, cloud tunnels, and rising smoke. Stairways are seen in Thai murals and in Buddha's descent from Trayatrimsa Heaven. The Egyptian Book of the Dead refers to the ladder to heaven, the *klimax* is a seven rung ladder in Mithraic mysteries, and the Russian of Voronezh bake dough ladders with seven rungs to honor their dead. In **China** and **Korea** a ladder is literally constructed of **swords** for the initiate to climb during the final stage of shamanic **initiation**.

Different means of descent provide access to the Lowerworld. Common symbols of descent are trees, stairs, caves, and holes, for example the holes found in the center of the floor of *kiva* homes in southwestern **North America**.

Bridges

Bridge themes in stories and myths are symbolic of making a crossing, often a dangerous one, from one reality to another. Bridges, like the Rainbow Bridge, connect different realities and allow the shaman to cross from **ordinary reality** to **non-ordinary reality**. An

example is found in Japanese initiations during which a bridge must be constructed upon seven arrows and seven boards.

Cosmic Rope

The Cosmic Rope appears in stories and myths. It holds heaven to the **earth** and the human **soul** to the body. The shamans of the **Huichol** of Central America, the **Inuit** around the North Pole, and the indigenous peoples of Asia and Tibet speak of a fine thread, as thin and silky as the thread of a spider, that connects the lifeforce (soul) to the body. In the Thai custom of *tham khwan*, that thread is tied to the body when the soul of a person is at risk of being lost.

Numbers

Certain numbers appear in **shamanism** and in other traditions including Judaism, **Daoism (Taoism)**, Islam, yoga, and Tibetan Buddhism. The numbers seven, nine, and twelve represent the layers of the Upperworld and the levels of the Lowerworld. These numbers appear again and again, in shamanism where journeying is central as well as in other religious practices in which journeying is used, but is not central to the practice. The presence of the numbers in religious traditions belies the journeying that was fundamental to earlier forms of that religious discipline. See also **Africa**; **Celtic**; **language**.

Heinze, R. I. *Shamans of the 20th Century*. New York: Irvington Publishers, Inc., 1991.

Perkins, J. *The World Is as You Dream It*. Rochester, VT: Destiny Books, 1994.

Walsh, Roger. "Phenomenological Mapping: A Method for Describing and Comparing States of Consciousness." *Journal of Transpersonal Psychology* 27, no. 1 (1995): 25–56.

Shamanism

Shamanism, both traditional and contemporary, is the practice of initiated

shamans, who are distinguished by their mastery of a range of **altered states of consciousness**. Shamanism arises from the actions the shaman takes in **non-ordinary reality** and the results of those actions in **ordinary reality**.

Trance is the technology of shamanism. Shamanic methods use a range of trance states involving **journey** trances, during which the shaman's **soul** leaves the body and moves into the spirit world, and **embodiment** trances, during which the shaman calls a helping spirit into his or her own body to work on the patient in the physical world. The type of trance and the depth of trance are determined by what the shaman needs to accomplish during the **ritual**.

These actions are made possible through the shaman's relationship with **helping spirits** who are the source of the shaman's information and **power**. Shamans conduct rituals for **healing** and **divination**. Rituals cannot be repeated by rote if they are to be kept relevant and effective. Shamans use trance states to access helping spirits who direct the creation and adaptation of ritual.

Shamanism is not a **religion**, though it is the prototype for the later development of the mystery religions. In shamanism there is no dogma, no church, no cult, and no divine personification. There are **prayers** and **sacrifice**, but not in the abstract form of religious worship. They are common, daily actions that maintain balance and well-being.

Shamanism demands spiritual discipline. This path of service involves personal sacrifice and the opportunity for the highest stages of mystical development for the mature shaman. Shamanism accesses the power of the **transpersonal** experience of life and of the ecstatic Connection-to-all-things. For the master shaman, shamanism discloses nothing less than what is found in the higher mystical traditions. See also **ecstasy**.

Peters, L. "Mystical Experience in Tamang Shamanism." *ReVision* 13, no. 2 (1990): 71–85.

Shaman Pharmaceuticals

Shaman Pharmaceuticals, Inc., is a traditional pharmaceutical company whose focus is to discover and develop novel pharmaceuticals in a way that is ethical and sustainable. By working with ethnobotany, isolation chemistry, pharmacology, and the people of the tropical forests Shaman Pharmaceuticals hopes to create a more efficient means of discovering drugs than mass screening and genetic engineering.

Simultaneous goals include devising effective strategies for producing raw materials that sustain the forest people and their ecosystems and developing sustainable and nondestructive harvesting methods for plant products that maintain the integrity, diversity, and productivity of the ecosystems.

King, S. R. *Cultural Survival Quarterly* 15, no. 3 (summer 1991).

Shaman's Death

The result of shamanic **initiation** is the death of the initiate's ego self. This death occurs in an **altered state of consciousness**, and is experienced as real death. It is not a psychological metaphor. Shamanic initiation creates a fundamental change in the initiate's existential condition. The initiate becomes another person whose orientation in the world is totally different. Because the familiar self dies away, shamanic initiation is often called a "little death" or the "shaman's death."

The ego is referred to as the "little self" because, in its pre-initiatory form, the ego and its associated belief system, keep the individual small minded and immature in behavior. The aspects of the ego that die off in initiation are the aspects of the ego that limit the shaman's relationship with the spirit world. It is through this relationship

that the **shaman** experiences a Connection-to-all-Things, or the "big self." This relationship demands **humility** from the shaman and the ability to surrender the ego to the will of the spirit world.

With the death of the ego self, the shaman's will is no longer controlled by the ego. The shaman gains the internal freedom to align his or her will consciously with the Will of the spirit world and receives his or her supernatural **power**. The shaman's relationship with spirit, his own and that of the **Kosmos**, is transformed in such a way that there is no turning back. See also **dismemberment** and **ego death**.

Eliade, Mircea. *Shamanism: Archaic Techniques of Ecstasy*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1964.

Shaman's Ladder

Ladders are found in shamanic **rituals** around the world. Generally the **ladder** has seven or twelve rungs, symbolic of the layers of ascent into the **Upperworld** or the levels of descent into the **Lowerworld**. Whether used as a means of ascent or descent, the ladder is symbolic of the **Tree of Life** and functions in the same way.

Like the Tree of Life, ladders are a means of communication between the worlds. They provide an alternate means of ascent for the **shaman** or the **souls** of the deceased into the Upperworld. They are also a means of descent for the **helping spirits** to join the shaman in the **Middleworld**. In some **cultures** a ladder is set up in the room in which the **healing** ritual will take place to allow an easy descent for the helping spirits who will aid the shaman.

The ladder functions whether or not it is created literally or is experienced only in **non-ordinary reality** during **trance**. A unique manifestation of the ladder is created by firing a succession of arrows into the **sky** for the journeying soul to use as a ladder. Ladders appear,

for example, in the rituals of shamanic cultures in Tibet, Mongolia, **South America**, **Southeast Asia**, India, and Indonesia.

Often the ladder is an aspect of the final stage or highest degree of shamanic **initiation**. For example, the *manang* (shaman) of the Dyak of Borneo is initiated in three stages of increasing difficulty. The final stage demands that the initiate successfully enter an ecstatic trance of **soul flight** and climb into the Upperworld on a ritual ladder. Ladders used in initiation are found, for example, in South America, Asia, where the ladder is made of **swords** or **metal** blades, and India, where the blades are wooden. See also **ecstasy** and **sword ladder**.

Eliade, Mircea. *Shamanism: Archaic Techniques of Ecstasy*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1964.

Vitebsky, Piers. *The Shaman*. London: Little, Brown and Company, 1995.

Shaman's Sickness

"Shaman's sickness," or **initiatory illness**, refers to the specific, physical and/or mental **illness** that results when **spirit** chooses a new shamanic candidate and possesses the candidate or takes his or her **soul** into the spirit world. The sickness does not respond to normal treatment, nor does it progress like a normal illness. It may advance and retreat without reason and defy our understanding of how similar symptoms normally function in the body.

This illness is cured only when the one stricken surrenders to the will of spirit, faces his or her fear of death, and cures his or her own madness or illness. The individual gains shamanic **power** in the process by finding meaning in the crisis and curing herself. As a result of this passage, the individual can work with the fears and madness in others having now crossed that emotional and psychological territory within her self. See also **shaman**.

Walsh, R. "Shamanic Cosmology: A Psychological Examination of the Shaman's Worldview." *ReVision* 13, no. 2. (1990): 86–100.

Shapeshifting

Shapeshifting is the ability to transform physically into other shapes, usually those of animals who serve as **helping spirits**. This phenomenon is widespread in **shamanism**. Some scholars apply the term to aspects of shamanic **rituals** that involve only partial transformation. In these rituals the **shaman** assumes at least some of the animal's characteristics, usually while dancing in an **embodiment** trance.

The literal, physical transformation of the shaman is mentioned frequently in stories of past shamans. The **power** and skill necessary are rare today, though shapeshifting does occur for all shamans while they are in journeying **trance** states. Some past shamans were capable of shapeshifting in the presence of spectators, while others could only perform this act of power alone. Shapeshifting is also an aspect of **sorcery**, **medicine**, and various magics of deception.

Shapeshifting is one means of learning and gathering power from the animals, plants, or other forms that the shaman transforms into. Jaguar shamans of **South America** and bear shamans of Asia and **North America** are particularly renowned for their ability to transform into animals. These transformations give them enormous powers for **healing**.

Another aspect of shapeshifting is the **transmutation** of the **transformed shaman**, biologically male shamans who adopt female **gender** roles as a prerequisite for **training** as shamans. Overtime the most powerful of these transformed shamans succeed in physically shapeshifting into females to better serve their roles as shamans. It cannot be proven whether or not the ancient shamans could transform physical form. However, it is clear that they

lived in a time during which the prevailing beliefs supported the abilities of shamans to physically change form at will.

Shapeshifting is the key component of the **Celtic** shaman's ability to access the power. As the shaman experiences life as animals, plants, **elements**, and faere folk, his or her web of awareness reaches out until he or she is ultimately aware from the perspective of all things and of the interconnectedness of all things. Those who have been all things experience the greatest universal truth: all things are made of the same **energy**, they share the same power, and that power and energy moves among all things, sharing the consciousness and the creative power of life. See also **animal spirits**; **journey**; **power displays**.

Cowan, Tom. *Fire in the Head: Shamanism and the Celtic Spirit*.

San Francisco: HarperCollins, 1993.

Lyon, William S. *Encyclopedia of Native American Shamanism: Sacred Ceremonies of North America*. Santa Barbara, CA: ABC-CLIO, 1998.

Matthews, John, et al. *The Celtic Shaman: A Handbook*. Rockport, MA: Element Books Ltd., 1991.

Shih-Niang

The male **transformed shamans** of **ancient China**. The *shih-niang* were described as "not male and not female," referring to their **gender-variant** nature, and "not **dreaming** and not awake," referring to their ability to move between the physical and spiritual worlds while in **trance**. The *shih-niang* dressed in a fusion of feminine, masculine, and **sacred** dress. They were employed by various cults, including Pan Hu of the canine warrior deity and Ta Wang Shen of the serpent king.

In ancient **China** the *wu* (**shamans**) were predominantly female. Trance states were considered a yin activity, used by all women as part of their personal spiritual practice. Because it was a

yin practice, any boy who demonstrated shamanic potential as a child was given a female name and dressed as a woman all his life. These boys became the *shih-niang*.

Conner, Randy P. *Blossom of Bone: Reclaiming the Connections Between Homoeroticism and the Sacred*. San Francisco: HarperCollins, 1993.

Shopan

The *shopan* is a **transformed shaman** of the Aleut and Kodiak peoples of the southern **Alaskan** regions. Their **gender** variance was recognized as children, sometimes as infants. These boys were raised as girls, wearing the feminine clothing and hair styles and plucking their facial hair. After adolescence their *shopan* **training** began as with all other Aleut *angakok*.

Mature *shopan* were highly respected *angakut*. As boys between the ages of ten to fifteen the *shopan* were often wed to older men, during their training. The Aleut considered it lucky to have a *shopan* as a partner. See also *achnucek* and **gender variant**.

Williams, W. L. *The Spirit and the Flesh*. Boston: Beacon Press, 1992.

Shrine

A shrine is a physical home for specific **spirits** here in the physical world. Shrines are similar to **altars** in function, however shrines are often permanent and public. For example, villages of the **Dagara** people have a shrine for the **spirit** of each of the five **elements**: **earth**, **fire**, **water**, Nature, and mineral in the village and an ancestral shrine in each family compound.

Shrines are a place a person goes to be in communication with the spirits of the shrine. It is a place to leave fresh **offerings** and make requests of the spirit of the shrine. It is a place to exercise and strengthen the relationship between humans and the spirits.

Once a shrine is built physically it must be activated energetically with offerings and a **ritual** to invite the spirit into its new home. In many **cultures** shrines have a keeper who tends the shrine and communicates the needs of the spirit in the shrine to the people. Activated shrines serve as a threshold between the physical world and spirit world. See also **ancestors**.

Shuar

The Shuar, *untsuri suara*, live in the Amazon rain forest of eastern Ecuador in an area between the Rio Pastaza in the north, the Rio Zamora in the south, the Rio Pangui in the east, and the Andes to the west. There are four other primary Shuar tribes: the Achuara to the northeast, the Mayna to the east of the Achuara, the Huambisa to the south-east, and the Aguaruna to the south southeast.

Shuar, meaning “man” or “people,” is how the Shuar refer to themselves. In the literature the Shuar are also called the Jivaro, Jibaro, Xivaro, or Shuara. The Shuar are the only group of peoples in **South America** to remain unconquered by the **Inka** (1527) or the Spaniards (1549), nor have they ever signed a treaty with the Spaniards.

The first mission was built in Shuar territory in 1870. Contact with whites and colonization increased steadily from that point for the Shuar living on desirable land. For the Shuar living in the interior, east of Cordillera de Cutucú, little changed in their traditional way of life until contact with the outside world in 1956.

The Shuar word for **shaman**, *uwishin*, means “someone who knows all the secrets.” *Uwishin* are healers and sorcerers who work with medicinal plants, spirit **powers** accessed through drinking *natem* (*ayahuasca*) and *tsentsak* (**magical darts**) to benevolent and malevolent ends, respectively.

For the Shuar, knowing how the world really is and how to manipulate its processes is power. Magical **phlegm**,

helping spirits, and *tsentsaks* are three traditional aspects or manifestations of the shaman's power. These manifestations of power can pass through many objects, substances, forms, and actions.

The First Shaman

The **First Shaman** of the Shuar was Tshunqui, goddess of the **waters**. A woman of white skin and long hair, she was able to transform herself into an anaconda. She lived underwater protected by crocodiles and anacondas and using a turtle as a stool. This is why *chumpis* (stools), symbols of the shaman, are carved as turtles.

From time to time Tshunqui supplied certain shamans with particularly deadly *tsentsak* of quartz **crystal**. Thus the origin of the power and **knowledge** of the use of the *tsentsak* is attributed to the Tshunqui, who is believed to still be alive today under the water. An important part of the **training** of an *uwishin* continues to be going for a time to live under the waters of a river with a Tshunqui. The *uwishin* makes a pact with Tshunqui who becomes his wife and mentor for this period of training.

An *uwishin's* knowledge comes from the teaching of other *uwishins*, **dreams**, **rituals**, and from the **spirits** he accesses when he drinks *natem*. Knowledge also comes from practical experiences like spending the night on beaches with dangerous animals and other tests and making many **sacrifices** such as experiencing prolonged hunger and thirst, extreme heat and cold, and sexual abstinence. The *uwishin* will spend years, on and off, learning from living alone in the jungle.

The path for gaining shamanic powers is the same for benevolent or malevolent *uwishin*. They are distinguished from each other by their use of that power. The *yahauci uwishin*, or *wawek*, is the sorcerer who derives his social rank primarily through the fear of what he might do. The *pener uwishin* is the shaman healer who derives his social rank primarily through the power of his **healing** and by being an asset to his neighbors.

Though the Shuar no longer shrink heads, jealousy continues to be a danger for successful *uwishin*. A shaman of a different Shuar family may be moved by his jealousy to lash out through an act of **sorcery** to kill the successful *uwishin*.

Payment for services is expected by shamans and sorcerers, usually with highly valued goods. The payment or sacrifice from the patient or petitioner performs a function; it closes the **circle** of **energy** that is opened by the shaman's work on the individual's behalf. Without this energetic closure the **illness** or energies removed during the session would be free to linger and enter other people, re-creating **disease** and illness in a new person.

Plant Hallucinogens

The Shuar believe that normal life is an illusion and that the true powers behind daily life lie in the spirit world. Therefore, true reality is revealed with the *uwishin's* potent hallucinogenic plant preparations. Even infants, within a few days of birth, are given a hallucinogenic drink to assist the infant in entering the "real" world and connecting with an Ancestor spirit who will help the child survive the hazards of infancy.

At six years of age Shuar boys must acquire an *arutam wakani*, the **soul** that can **journey** into the spirit realms and communicate with the ancestors. The corresponding **initiation** for young girls is unclear. Training as a shaman is based on the successful completion of this initiation into adulthood.

To get his *arutam* vision the boy and his father travel to the **sacred** waterfall, the origin of the Shuar people and a gathering place of spirits. They travel together in a sacred way, bathing and fasting to cleanse and drinking only **tobacco** water. When they arrive they bathe in a ritual way in the falls by day and call the spirits to them at night.

Natem (*ayahuasca*) or *maikoa* (*Brugmansia* or *Datura*) may be added

to the tobacco water to induce an **alter-nate state of consciousness** that will induce the boy's contact with the spirit world. Once in the spirit realm, if the boy has the courage to reach out and touch the spirit that comes to him, the *arutam* will enter his body as a pair of jaguar or anaconda. The **vision** then explodes and the boy, having made contact, returns home. If he does not speak of his experiences the *arutaum* returns in his dreams in the form of a human Ancestor and begins to communicate with him.

Natem induces a much less violent intoxication and is used more frequently. However, if *natem* is not successful in revealing the boy's *arutam*, *maikoa* will be used. *Maikoa* is the most powerful and also the most dangerous hallucinogen used by the Shuar. They distinguish six types of *maikoa*, all of which are stronger than *natem*.

Shamans prefer to use *natem* in their healing sessions because the potency of *maikoa* is too great for the shaman to be able to function deliberately, **singing**, sucking, and interacting, during the healing ritual. The *uwishin*'s achievements are directly connected not only to his or her ability to enter the "real" world but to his or her ability to use those energies and spirits with intention.

Training

The first act of formal training with a master *uwishin*, who may be a man or a woman, is to receive the master's breath into the crown of the head. This transfer of energy enables the **apprentice** to be more at peace and healthy. During the years of apprenticeship that follow, the master and apprentice will fast and drink *natem* many times. The apprentice will also drink *malikawa*, a **plant hallucinogen** with powerful **cleansing** properties that help the body to heal and to integrate the changes brought on by the training.

Periodically during training the apprentice will live a simple life, alone in the forest. During that time he drinks

natem to contact the spirit world and acquire helping spirits for protection. *Datura* may also be consumed to develop **spirit vision**. An *uwishin* properly trained can become one with the jaguar spirit allowing it to enter his or her soul and transform his or her body. These powerful *uwishin* are known to run through the forest as jaguars.

The master *uwishin* experiences the inner reality of his or her apprentice the first evening they drink *natem*. In training the master, who appears under the influence of *natem* to have a gold, red, and greenish "crown" above his head, creates an evolutionary process in his apprentice that induces an existential change from which the apprentice cannot go back to his or her former self. During this time the apprentice must have a spontaneous dream vision of the future that marks the spirit world's acceptance of the new *uwishin*.

More often women train female *uwishin*. Men do not readily agree to train women who ask because the Shuar believe that, though men and women are equal, women can be more powerful than men. Women have access to secrets that men do not have.

Acquiring Power—Tsentsaks

Tsentsaks, or invisible darts, are the essence of the *uwishin*'s power. They have a **dual nature** and an almost infinite variety of forms in both their material object form and their helping spirit form. *Tsentsaks* reside in the *uwishin*'s body and are only visible when he or she has ingested *natem*. Sorcerers send a *tsentsak* into the body of the victim to create illness, pain, or death. Shamans send a *tsentsak* into the body of the victim to recover the sorcerer's intruding dart and to aid the shaman in its removal.

The power of a *tsentsak* varies according to the type and the power of the master *uwishin* who originally supplied it. The most powerful, and therefore the most valued, *tsentsaks* come from the *uwishin* of the **Quechua-**

speaking Canelos tribe. It is also important to note that the *tsentsaks* from a sorcerer can only create another sorcerer, while those from a healing *uwishin* can create either sorcerers or healers.

Any adult male or female who presents a sizable gift to an established *uwishin* can receive instruction and a supply of *tsentsak* helping spirits. Neither a sorcerer nor a shaman can expect to become a successful practitioner unless the power of his or her *tsentsak* exceeds the power in those he or she is working against.

The *tsentsak* power is transferred to the lesser *uwishin* in magical phlegm, that appears as a brilliant, translucent substance under the influence of *natem*. The master *uwishin* regurgitates the phlegm containing the *tsentsaks*, cuts part of it off with a machete, and gives it to the lesser *uwishin* who swallows it. The receiving *uwishin* experiences stomach pain and must stay in bed for ten days, repeatedly drinking *natem*. The master *uwishin* periodically *camays* (blows into) and rubs the body of the receiver to aid in the integration of the new power.

Taboos must be followed if the powers of the *tsentsak* are to integrate properly. The receiving *uwishin* must remain inactive and abstain from sex for several months. The end of the first month is a critical time. The first *tsentsak* emerges and with it a tremendous desire to misuse the power and perform sorcery. If the *uwishin* acts on this impulse he or she will become a sorcerer. If he or she controls this impulse and swallows the first *tsentsak*, he or she can become a curing *uwishin*. Either way, to gain the power to kill or heal a man, the *uwishin* must follow the taboos and abstain from sex for five months. To become a truly effective shaman or sorcerer the *uwishin* must abstain for a full year.

During this period of taboo and abstinence, the new *uwishin* collects and consumes pairs of all kinds of insects, plants, and other small objects. The greater the variety of these objects,

the greater the *uwishin's* ability. These objects are transformed into the material forms of the *tsentsaks*. Because of their dual nature, each *tsentsak* also has a spirit form, such as a giant butterfly, jaguar, or monkey, who assist the *uwishin* in his tasks.

The ability of the *uwishin* to perform successful sucking healings depends largely upon the quantity and strength of his or her own *tsentsaks*. Under the influence of *natem* the *tsentsak* do many things simultaneously. As magical darts they directly assist the *uwishin* in sucking healings. As helping spirits they cover his body in a protective shield and remain on the lookout for any enemy *tsentsaks* headed toward the shaman. When an enemy *tsentsak* appears they close together around the point of entry and repel it. *Uwishin* constantly drink tobacco water to keep the *tsentsaks* fed and ready to repel the *tsentsaks* of sorcerers.

Power Loss

Any *uwishin* who gives *tsentsaks* to another *uwishin* can draw them back at any time without notice, regardless of the distance separating them. This sudden loss of shamanic power may result in serious illness or death, so it is not done frivolously. Typical reasons are a personal offense or a compelling bribe from a third party. As a safeguard against this type of power loss it is common practice to obtain *tsentsaks* from several master *uwishins*.

Though the *uwishin* may have hundreds, the *tsentsaks* are gradually used up through curing, sorcery, or passing them on to lesser *uwishins*. Every few years the *uwishin* expects to visit a master *uwishin* to have his supply of *tsentsak* replenished. At death a *uwishin's* remaining *tsentsak* fly back to the *uwishin* from whom they were originally received.

The Soul

The Shuar recognize three kinds of souls. The *nekás wakanĩ* is the original or ordinary soul. The *arutam* is an

acquired soul and is significant in many aspects of Shuar **culture**, particularly relative to men and their sense of power and maleness. The third type of soul is a *muisak*, or avenging soul, which is central to the traditional practice of head shrinking.

The *nekás wakani* is born at the same moment as the person, male and female. The material presence of this “true soul” is primarily in the **blood** and bleeding is perceived of as process of soul-loss. At death the *nekás wakani* leaves the body, returns to the site of its birth, and lives there, an invisible “human demon” in an invisible spirit house. Over time it transforms into a “true demon” and into a giant butterfly, and finally into water vapor.

The *arutam* soul does not exist at birth; it must be acquired at the sacred waterfall as described above. A person may possess two *arutam* souls at a time and endeavors to do so. The *uwishin* always possess *arutam* souls, which appear as an inverted rainbows in the person’s chest when viewed under the influence of *natem*.

The Shuar believe that a man cannot die while he possesses an *arutam* soul. Therefore, it must leave before he can die. At the moment of death, the *arutam wakani* comes into existence for the first time and, once created, is eternal. This transformation is said to generate strong winds, thunder, and lightning at the site of the death.

The *muisak* is closely related to the *arutam* soul. The sole reason for the existence of a *muisak* is to avenge a death and only a person who possesses an *arutam* soul is capable of forming a *muisak* to avenge his death. The *muisak* exists in the corpse and subsequently in the shrunken head, or *tsantsa*. The completion of the head-shrinking process forces the *muisak* to enter the *tsantsa* and binds it there.

If the human head is not taken and the *tsantsa* prepared, the *muisak* is able to travel from the corpse and transform into any of three types of demons, or *iwancí*, to avenge the death. These three

demons take forms of the natural world that can kill, e.g., a particularly dangerous poisonous snake, the water boa constrictor or anaconda, and a large tree which falls on its victim. Cause of death by these means is considered supernatural.

Illness

Uwishins diagnose one of two causes of illness: an act of sorcery by a malevolent *uwishin* or a microbes or other infectious agent from the environment. Both types will respond to the *uwishin*’s treatment. “White man’s diseases,” normally of an epidemic nature, such as whooping cough, measles, colds, and some mild diarrheas, are normally the only diseases not attributed to sorcery.

Sorcery is believed to be the cause of the vast majority of illness, pain and non-violent deaths. *Tsentsaks* are therefore the main supernatural cause of illness and the cure. *Tsentsaks* can only be seen by *uwishin* while under the influence of *natem* and are otherwise normally invisible.

Healing

The healing sessions are held almost exclusively at night or at least in a darkened room so that the *uwishin*, in a *natem*-induced **trance**, can see the **non-ordinary reality** aspects of the illnesses. An *uwishin* can cure five to ten patients during a single session. Those who are to be healed gather in the early evening and drink *natem* with the *uwishin*, as the spirit of *natem* is believed to be a healer in its own right.

The *uwishin* alerts his or her *tsentsak* helping spirits by whistling his or her personal curing **song**. After about fifteen to twenty minutes he or she starts singing his or her **icaros**. There are many different *icaros* and no one *uwishin* knows them all. The *icaros* come from the particular spirits and forces of nature the *uwishin* is in working relationship with. Therefore the *icaros* a *uwishin* uses depends on the knowledge and discoveries he or she has made with the spirits.

At first the *icaros* are sung to the spirits from whom the *uwishin* will draw healing power. Eventually, those spirits present themselves and begin to **sing** through the *uwishin*. The *uwishin*, and/or the assistant, narrates the healing process, announcing the helping spirits as they arrive and reporting on the progress and success of the healing as it transpires.

First the shaman will “look” into the patient to diagnose the true nature and cause of the illness, sometimes blowing a diagnostic *tsentsak* in to see more clearly. The *natem* enables the *uwishin* to see into the body as if the patient were transparent. If the illness is due to sorcery, the *uwishin* will see the intruding object within the patient’s body clearly enough to determine whether or not he can cure the illness.

When the *uwishin* is ready to suck out the offending object, he or she regurgitates two of his or her own *tsentsak* that match the object seen in the patient. If he or she sees a bone fragment or bug, he or she must regurgitate two bone fragments or two of the same kind of bug. The *uwishin* holds one of these *tsentsak* in the front and one in the back of the mouth and then sucks on the area of the body where the offending object is located.

The pair of *tsentsak* are expected to catch the offending object as it is sucked from the patient’s body. The *uwishin*’s *tsentsak* pair trap the sorcerer’s *tsentsak* and incorporate its essence into themselves. The *uwishin* then vomits out this incorporated object and displays it to the patient and family. The *uwishin* does not swallow it because it would make him/her ill and could kill him/her.

The offending object, once removed, must be disposed of carefully because it can enter an innocent passerby and cause illness again. It is either thrown into the air so that it flies back to the sorcerer of origin or it is shot into the forest where the energies of Nature will consume it and render it harmless.

If the offending *tsentsak* has been shot with such force that it passes all the

way through the body then there is nothing to suck out and the patient will probably die. If the *tsentsak* only lodges in the body then it is possible for the *uwishin* to remove it if his or her *tsentsaks* are as powerful as those of the sorcerer.

When illness is diagnosed as something other than sorcery the *uwishin* may suck out foul or stuck energies, for example the essential energy of a tumor, perform a cleansing, or send the patient to the white doctors for antibiotics. If **soul loss** is diagnosed the *uwishin* will enter the spirit world with his or her helping spirits and retrieve the lost soul. The Shuar believe that soul loss is caused by *espantu*, a sudden fear or trauma.

Song—Icaros

Song is used regularly by the Shuar, shaman and non-shaman alike, to communicate directly with the spirit world. For example, the women sing every morning to Nunkúí, the goddess of the **earth**, plants, gardens, and protector of women, so as not to startle her as they go to the gardens to dig up tuberous crops. Successful potters were given songs by the spirits to sing to prevent their pots from cracking when firing. The shaman sings *icaros* throughout the healing sessions to empower the healings and to guide the *natem*-induced experiences of the patient’s.

Instruments:

The *uwishin* accompanies himself during the healing session on the *tumank*, a **bow** that is plucked while held between the lips. It is made of monkey gut or fishing line strung on a three to four foot long piece of bamboo. The Shuar also play a *kitiar*, a violin carved from a single block of wood. See also *Brugmansia aurea*.

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Siberia

The vast Northern Asiatic region from the Pacific Ocean to the Ural mountains and from the Arctic Ocean in the north to Kazakhstan in the south. It is the general consensus of scholars that the peoples living in this vast region express enough common cultural traits to be treated as one large group, the Siberians. Siberian peoples were chiefly hunters and reindeer herdspeople, near the coast hunters and whalers, and on the steppe herdsman and breeders all with some degree of nomadism.

The term “Siberian **shamans**” encompasses shamans from the **Saami** of Lapland to the **Chukchee** of the Chukchee Peninsula. The primary groups are the **Tungus**, Mongols, Chukchee, and Samoyed. The word “shaman” comes from the Evenk (Tungus) **language**. The **shamanism** of this region (Siberia and Mongolia) is referred to as “classic shamanism” in the literature. However, the “classic shaman” is an academic ideal which only partly reflects reality and is no longer universally believed to be true.

There is rich variation between tribes in the specifics and forms of their shamanic practices. However, there are also overall patterns in the functions performed. The dominant **trance** state used for **divination** and **healing** is **soul flight**, during which the shaman’s **soul** leaves the physical realms and enters the spirit world. The spirit world is made up of many layers all connected by the **Cosmic Tree**, Cosmic Pillar, or **World Mountain**. New shamans are chosen spontaneously by **spirit** and this call usually manifests in a prolonged, unexplained **illness**. The **blacksmith** is often fundamental in shaman’s transformation during **initiation**.

Most Siberian tribes recognized several different kinds of healers, e.g., herbal healers, diviners, and those who work exclusively with the souls of the dead. Among shamans there are two general types: There is the shaman who uses his or her mastery of trance to work with souls, **spirits**, and illness. These practitioners are shamans as defined in this volume. There are also “clan shamans” who care for the spiritual and reproductive well-being of the family through **prayers** and **sacrifice**. These practitioners do not use trance states and are **priests** as defined in this volume.

This distinction is often referred to as “black” and “white” shamans. The Buryat and **Yakut** people, for example, consider those shamans who enter trance and work with the spirits in **ritual**, “black shamans.” Those practitioners who conduct ceremonies of prayer and/or sacrificial **offering** and do not use trance are “white shamans.”

Cosmology

The Siberian peoples of North Asia conceive of the spirit world as a world exactly like the physical world only inverted or in reverse. This is why rituals that involve the spirits often begin at sunset. It is morning in the spirit world and the spirits are waking. Siberian shamanism was greatly influenced by Buddhism in the Middle Ages. The cosmology became more elaborate and the shamanic practices more institutionalized.

The spirit world is comprised of an **Upperworld**, a **Middeworld**, and a **Lowerworld**. The Upper and Lowerworlds are experienced by the shamans as having layers, the numbers of which vary between six, seven, nine, and twelve usually, depending on the cultural group or tribe. For example the Samoyed shamans **journey** in six levels under the sea, like the **Eskimo**, while the Tungus conceive of levels under the **earth**, but not the sea.

The Cosmic Tree

All of these worlds are connected by the limbs, trunk, and branches of the **Tree of Life**, or Cosmic Tree. The shaman travels along or through the Cosmic Tree to find safe passage to and from all the realms of the spirit world. The Cosmic Tree itself has many layers of rich meaning. It describes a universe that is in continual regeneration as it draws on an inexhaustible spring of cosmic life from the Source, the great reservoir of the **sacred** that is the source of all things.

The Cosmic Tree is the source of wood for the shaman's **drum** and is often part of the designs painted on the drum head. Symbolically, the shaman climbs the Cosmic Tree each time he or she climbs the sacred birch in ritual. Replicas of the tree are placed inside and in front of the shaman's yurt.

First Shaman

The creation mythology of the different Siberian peoples refers to an earlier time when relations between the people and the spirits, and the Supreme Being and shamans, were more intimate. Events occur that cause a distancing in the relationships between the physical and spiritual worlds. Humans struggle with **dis-ease** and death and the Supreme Being sends the First Shaman or another surrogate to defend and heal humans.

Souls

Siberian peoples conceive of the human soul as a multiple soul. A persona can have anywhere from three to seven souls, depending on the **culture** and the person. These aspects of the soul have different destinations at death. One aspect remains in the grave with the body and goes into the earth, another descends to the **Land of the Dead**, and a third aspect ascends to the Upperworld. There is variation across Siberia in the number of souls and where they travel at death.

The Call—Dismemberment

Siberian shamans are called spontaneously by the spirits. **The call** usually

manifests in an unexplained physical and/or mental illness that does not respond normally to treatment. This is often referred to as an **initiatory illness**, however this illness is more a test of the candidate's readiness to train than a final initiation. In many cultures there are initiations later when the new shaman has displayed the **power** and ability to practice.

While the candidate lies in a state of "illness," he or she is also in an **altered state of consciousness**, during which his or her soul travels in the spirit world. The candidate experiences a **dismemberment** death at the hands (claws and teeth) of spirit, and recovering from that, instruction in how to heal and perform ritual. The experience often ends with the understanding that the candidate must now become a shaman or he or she will get sick and die.

There are many variations in the specifics of who the spirits are, where they take the new shaman, and the exact nature of his or her dismemberment or **ego death**. In some cultures the initiate must pass a test like having a certain number of bones or kind of bones.

Divination

The shaman's function in the community is healing and divination. Divination is used to diagnose the cause of illness, to find game, lost objects, and people, to observe things at a distance or in other times, and to discern the meaning of particular tribal events. The shaman uses the drum to induce trance for the *kamlanie*, a **shamanic healing** ritual used for healing and/or divination.

Other tools and methods are also used for divination. The drum itself is used in one method of divination, in which the movement of small objects across the drum head indicates the answer. Other methods vary with shaman, tribe, and culture. For example, **scapulimancy** in which the shaman reads the cracks of a heated scapular bone, or Buddhist cubes or dice which are cast and read.

Healing

Illness is believed to be caused by **soul loss**, which is caused by the soul wandering and getting lost or being stolen by a spirit or sorcerer with malevolent intent. The shaman must enter trance to find the lost soul and capture it or convince it to return to the patient's body. In some parts of Asia the **energy intrusion** or **spirit intrusion (possession)** is also a cause of illness. In this case the shaman must extract the intruding magical object or exorcise the spirit in the patient's body. Sometimes illness is caused by a combination of the above, for example, soul loss followed by spirit possession.

Some illness is caused by disrespect or an omission in respect shown to the spirit world. In these cases recovery is dependent on restoring balance between the human and spiritual forces. The shaman must divine the true cause of the illness and the ritual sacrifices necessary to restore balance.

Psychopomp

The shaman also serves as a **psychopomp**, guiding the souls of the deceased to the Land of the Dead. Among the Altaic, the Goldi, and the Yurak peoples, the shaman escorts the deceased to the beyond at the end of the funeral banquet. Among the Tungus, it is believed that only the souls of the deceased who linger in the land of the living beyond the usual period need the shaman's assistance.

In some Siberian cultures there are practitioners who specialize in handling the dead. Whether it is a shaman or a specialist the practitioner must be familiar with the road to the Land of the Dead and able to capture the soul and convey it to its new dwelling place.

The Shaman's Drum

Some scholars believe that the Tibetan double drum, a round, double-headed drum with a wooden handle, is the prototype for the drums of central and north Asia. The shaman's drum is a large round **frame drum** with one or two heads and a wooden handle. The drum's

head is painted with the symbols of the shaman's Universe, a map of the spirit realms the shaman journeys through while in trances.

The drum functions practically as a means to induce trance. In many cultures the shaman describes riding the drum as a horse or a boat through the spirit world. The drum functions magically as the Cosmic Tree, allowing the shaman passage between the worlds.

The frame of the drum is taken from a tree that is the Cosmic Tree. The shaman is guided to that tree by spirit, just as he or she is guided to the animal whose hide will be used for the drum-head. Sacrifices of **blood** and vodka are offered to the tree and then the drum must be animated. During the various animation rituals the spirit of the tree and the spirit of the animal whose skin was used are embodied in the drum to awaken it.

When a drum is first constructed it is unusable because its spirit is not yet awake. The drum is given to a small child to play with for a few days. Then the shaman must look for the spirit of the animal who gave its skin for the drum. The shaman follows the animal through its life in reverse all the way back to its birthplace, where the spirit of the animal can be caught and brought back to enliven the drum. In cultures where the ancestral shaman determines the size and kind of drum, the wood to be used, the animal skin to be used, and the designs to paint on it, that spirit must be approached to approve and awaken the drum.

The Shaman's Costume

The **costumes** of Siberian shamans are elaborate and distinctly different district to district. Each garment is created with symbolic design in the structure of the garment as well as the decorations applied. The costumes include caps, which often denote rank, but no **masks**. In addition to an elaborate costume, **transformed shamans** often tattooed their faces, tattooing being a Siberian characteristic of feminine beauty.

The characteristics similar in the costumes of every Siberian shaman are: the basic caftan hung with iron disks and figures, often of mythical animals; a veil or blindfold to cover the eyes so that the shaman can more easily be guided by inner light; an iron or copper breast-plate, and a cap. The iron disks serve a variety of functions, the primary being protection against the intrusion of the malevolent spirits.

The costume often has characteristics of a bird, for example **feathers** applied like wings or the fur of the caftan is sewn into tufts. The feathers add to the image of the shaman dancing and embodying Merkyut, the Bird of the Heavens in the ecstatic flight through the spirit realms.

The shaman's costume embodies spirits and is therefore a **power object**. In many Siberian cultures the shaman cannot conduct rituals without the power of the costume. Some costumes embodied spirits of the clan and, in that sense, the costume belonged to the clan and functioned as part of the prosperity of clan.

A novice shaman must see his or her costume in a **dream**. If he or she sees the costume of a deceased shaman the novice will see where it is and travel to the people of its clan. The novice must buy it from the relatives of the **dead shaman**, however the costume is not allowed to leave the clan. The costume embodies clan spirits, and if worn by anyone who does not treat them with respect or who cannot control them, the spirit may bring illness and misfortune to the clan.

Costumes that were worn out were hung in the forest to allow the spirits to leave. There were also many different ritual procedures for the handling of a deceased shaman's costume when he or she died without passing the costume on. The costume inspires the fear and apprehension in non-shamans and there are ritual procedures for its storage, transportation, and movement in the overall ritual process.

A variety of caps completed the shaman's costumes. Generally they were feather crowns or **metal** caps with antlers. The cap like the costume embodies spirit. It is considered the most important part of the costume because a great deal of the shaman's power is hidden there. Without the cap, the Siberian shaman is deprived of all real power. Different caps may represent different **helping spirits**. Often a progression of caps marks the shaman's progression of skills and acquisition of power.

For example, in some regions the brown owl cap cannot be worn by a shaman immediately after his or her initiation. In the course of a *kamlanie* the spirits reveal to the new shaman when he or she will have acquired enough power to wear the cap and use other higher insignia without danger.

Bronze Mirrors

The bronze **mirror**, called *küzüngü* (Turks), *panaptu* (**Manchu**), and *toli* (Mongol and Tungus), is used by shamans for personal protection and in **diagnosis** and healing. The copper mirror, believed by some to be a **sun** sign, is the only part of the shaman's **paraphernalia** that is not inherited or made new. In the past they were found, usually in the wilderness, in a ravine, or flying in the rays of the sun.

The use and meaning of the copper mirrors varies from tribe to tribe. For many it provides a means to see into the spirit world with "spirit eyes," for example, the mirror enables the shaman to "see the (spirit) world," to "place the spirits," or to reflect the needs of mankind into the spirit world. Other tribes use the copper mirror to see the souls of the deceased, particularly ghosts.

Plant Hallucinogens

The *amanita muscaria* mushroom is possibly the oldest **plant hallucinogen** and the most prominent plant **entheogen** used in the Asiatic region of the world. Siberian shamans call it the

“mainstay of the Heavens” and use it to enter trance and fly into the Upperworld. While entering into and in the initial stages of trance the shaman **dances** for the spirit of the **mushroom**, to call in the helping spirits and to deepen the trance.

Gender

It is somewhat odd that many people, including anthropologists, assume that the earliest shamans were males given the linguistic evidence to the contrary. Russian anthropologists and linguists have shown clues hidden in the tribal languages of some parts of Siberia that the original shamans were women. Among the Siberian and Altaic tribal peoples the words for a female shaman (utygan, udagan, and udaghan) are linguistically similar, showing that they derive from the same root in a similar timeframe. In contrast the words for male shamans (saman, oyoun, bo, and **kam**) are linguistically unrelated, later developments.

Close

Siberia shamanism coexists to a great degree with the practices of Buddhism and **Lamaism** that first spread across Asia. However, it did not fare as well under the severe suppression of the Russian and Chinese governments during the 20th century. Shamans who continued to practice in order to serve their people and their spirits did so in secret and at terrible danger to themselves.

Many modern Siberian shamans have limited **knowledge**, an eclectic arsenal of techniques, and are often judged by members of their own groups to not be as powerful as the shamans, pre-suppression. However, the fact that any knowledge, power, and skills remain at all is a testament to a great strength of spirit and a true commitment to the good of the people.

Siberia, the land of **classical shamanism**, is also a land of dying shamanism. In Northern Siberia for example, an 83-year-old Nanay shaman is the last of the shamans in her village.

There is no one to pass on her lifetime of knowledge and skills to and the gift of power from her spirits. This tragedy repeats itself across Siberia and around the globe in the **South America, North America, Australia, and Africa**. See also **black and white shamans; Buryat (Buriat); death and dying; Koryak; multiple soul belief; Tuva**.

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Silence

It is the wisdom of shamanic peoples to leave in silence the things we cannot talk about clearly in **words**. There are states of being and numinous experiences that are central to **shamanic altered states of consciousness** and **shamanic healing** experiences which defy description through words.

Choosing not to talk about **sacred** experiences is a way to contain and protect the **energy**. Though powerful, the energy of the sacred is illusive and easily contaminated. Silence is both a form of protecting the sacred and a means by which to hold the sacred while the non-rational aspects of a sacred experience are integrated.

Silence is often a necessary prerequisite to having an experience of the sacred. This is in part the reason for the traditional **vision quest** that lasts for three to four days in silence. The vision quest is time designated for silence in the hope that a message from **spirit** will be “heard.”

Silence is both a way to open to the sacred and to integrate the numinous aspects of sacred experiences. Silence is one of four universal **healing** salves

(**storytelling, singing, dance**) employed by indigenous peoples to maintain health and well-being. Discomfort with silence, or any of the four healing salves, indicates a state of **soul loss**. See also **altered states of consciousness** and **song**.

Arrien, Angeles. *The Four-fold Way: Walking the Paths of the Warrior, Teacher, Healer, and Visionary*. San Francisco: HarperCollins, 1993.

Sima-Kade

Sima-Kade is the Zulu **Tree of Life**. *Sima-Kade* means the One who stands for all time, who has been standing for all time, and who will continue standing for all time. All people and things are connected to *Sima-Kade* and through *Sima-Kade* all things are connected to each other. This is the essence of the Tree of Life.

Sima-Kade fell in love with the All-knowing, Omniscient, *Ninhavanhu-Ma*, the silvery goddess. *Ma*, the Imperfect Undying One, was the very first Goddess of human form. She placed the heavens in order, the stars and the **sun** in the **sky**, and made the **earth** firm to live on. She created the pattern from which all life is formed and that is why we are all imperfect, born of the Great Struggle between Dark and Light.

Ma tried to escape the strange, knarled *Sima-Kade* by running across the great earth and **shapeshifting** through many forms. But *Sima-Kade* captured her in his twisted embrace. In this union, *Ma* became the first to accept a path in life that she, like the **shaman**, did not desire, but could not resist.

She gave birth to the first nation of humans who populated the barren Kalahari. The **First People** were all of one kind, sharing the same stature, ochre red skin, no hair, and the golden eyes of *Ma*. They lived in peace for more than ten thousand years.

As *Sima-Kade* watched the birth pains of his beloved *Ma*, helpless and

awed, he transformed into the first spring. Green buds burst forth. Seeds spewed from his body and grew immediately in the rocky plains. Lush green began to spread across the earth. Forests grew and in their search for **water** the clouds began the cycle of water on earth. Together, *Ma* and *Sima-Kade* gave birth to all life.

Sima-Kade's roots sprouted reptiles, while animals snarled and howled and burst from his branches. Insects emerged in clouds of humming and whining. **Birds** flew and waddled from his trunk and the **song** of life began where there had been no life. See also **Zulu**.

Mutwa, Credo Vusa'mazulu. *Song of the Stars: The Lore of a Zulu Shaman*. Barrytown, NY: Station Hill Openings, 1996.

Sing

A sing or **chant** is a lengthy and complicated **ceremony** that is prescribed for **healing** among the indigenous peoples of the southwestern **North America**, particularly the **Dineh**. See also *hataál*.

Singing

Singing is a tool used by **shamans** and shamanic peoples to open their hearts and minds to **spirit** and/or to embody spirit. Most shamans have a personal **power song**. By singing that **song** the shaman gathers and focuses his or her own **soul** in his or her heart, mind, and body.

Helping spirits each have their own song. These **spirits** teach their songs to people in **dreams**, **altered state of consciousness** experiences, or during **vision quests**. Singing these songs calls that spirit into the shaman's body, inducing an **embodiment** trance. Or the shaman can use the song to call the helping spirit into the **sacred space** of the **ritual**.

Both songs and **dances** are traditionally considered **sacred** in origin because

they are revealed directly by spirit. Singing as instructed by spirit is a form of **prayer**. It is also a way to gather **power** from **non-ordinary reality** for use in **ordinary reality**. For example, **Lakota** shamans take years to learn the songs and **rhythms** necessary to hold particular spirits in sacred space once they have entered the shaman's ritual.

Singing is one of four universal, **healing** salves (**storytelling**, **silence**, **dance**) employed by indigenous peoples to maintain health and well-being. To stop singing, or to start feeling discomfort in any of the four healing salves, indicates a state of **soul loss**. See also **trance**.

Langdon, E. Jean, and G. Bear. *Portals of Power: Shamanism in South America*. Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1992.

Sioux

See **Lakota**.

Si.Si.Wiss

Si.Si.Wiss means **sacred** breath or sacred life. It is one of many traditional **medicine** practices of the Pacific Northwest Coast region. Within the Si.Si.Wiss tradition there are several different kinds of medicine. Some people heal with medicinal plants, some heal hands-on, while other heal with **singing**, drumming, or dancing.

Traditional **healing** ceremonies are group experiences in which people work together with the help of **spirit** to heal each other. The person doing the healing gives themselves over to the "healing spirit" and allows that spirit to enter their heart and guide what they do.

Singing and dancing are important tools in the Si.Si.Wiss tradition. They are used to pray and to heal and to gather personal **energy** before beginning healing work on others. Ancient **songs** are central to Si.Si.Wiss healing practices. These songs do not change. Healers learn the ancient, time-tested songs

first to build their strength before learning and using their own, new songs.

It is common to see Si.Si.Wiss healers work with candlelight and firelight to cleanse and clear energies around the body. Another common technique is brushing energy off with the hands and releasing it upwards. The **drum** and bell are tools used to support journeying. See also **dance**.

White, T. "Northwest Coast Medicine Teachings." *Shaman's Drum* 23 (Spring 1991): 36–43.

Skull

In many shamanic **cultures**, the head (or the skull) contains the wisdom, truth, and **power** of a being, as well as a part of the **soul**. For some cultures the head contains the point of passage, or portal, between the physical and spirit worlds. Skulls were preserved as **power objects** and often handed down through family lines.

The **Shuar** of the Amazon Basin shrink the heads of their enemies to capture the **arutam**, or warrior soul of the dead. This practice honors the eternal power of the warrior spirit to avenge its death. By capturing the **arutam** and ritually securing it in the head through the shrinking process, the victorious warrior and his family are protected from harm. The heads are cared for generation after generation, to contain the avenging **arutam** and protect the family line.

In Northern European cultures the head is a mystical source of truth, wisdom, and **healing** for warriors and **shamans**. A common theme in **Celtic** mythology is the severed head that guides warriors to victory against impossible odds. In Teutonic **myths** the god Mimir's head guards the well at the base of the **World Tree**, Yggdrasil. Hanging from this tree by one leg the great Norse shaman, **Odin**, received wisdom and understanding from the spirit world and brought forth the secrets of the **runes** to his people.

The Yukagir people of Central Asia believe that ancient **knowledge** and information about the afterlife gathered during a shaman's life through his or her **journeys** is retained in the skull of the shaman after death. The skulls of **dead shamans** were preserved and cared for as **sacred** power objects. They were used as **divination** tools by living shamans. The simplest method was to present the questions and then note the changing weight of the skull, light indicating yes and heavy indicating no.

The **Huichol** believe that all life came into being through the **neirika**. It is the portal that unifies the **spirit** of all things and all worlds and is found in the human head. It is both a passageway and a barrier between the worlds. Huichol shamans activate or awaken the **neirika** to use it as a passageway to move between the worlds.

Cowan, Tom. *Fire in the Head: Shamanism and the Celtic Spirit*. San Francisco: HarperCollins, 1993.

Eliade, Mircea. *Shamanism: Archaic Techniques of Ecstasy*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1964.

Sky

The **spirit** of the sky is perceived as a **helping spirit**. **Shamans** work with the sky spirit and with the related elemental power, **air**. The **power** of the sky is called on for **vision**, illumination, creativity, and expression.

The role of sky in **shamanic healing** rituals is to connect humans with the mercurial nature of illumination and revelation, to inspire creativity and swift change where needed, and to open people to the possibility of instantaneous transformation. The spirit of the sky is invoked to help people connect to the power of the stars, the planets, the **sun**, the **Kosmos**, and all the spirit help of the **Upperworld**. The sky is also a receptacle for people's gratitude for the abundance of support from spirit in their lives.

Beyond these qualities, the role of sky is defined specifically **culture** by culture. See also **elements**; **healing**; **journey**; **ritual**.

Smudge

To purify or cleanse a **power object**, person, or **ceremony** with the smoke from a burning plant, like cedar, or plant resin, like copal. Plants commonly used include sweetgrass, wormwood, **tobacco**, sage, juniper, etc.

Soft Shaman

Transformed shamans, or soft shamans, are biological males who transform their **gender** from masculine to feminine to become **shamans**. "Transformed" refers to the gender metamorphosis that occurs within the male as he becomes female. Transformed shamans are also called "soft shamans," which refers to the fluidity of their sexual and gender identification. Soft shamans are seen by their **culture** as belonging to a third or alternate gender. This transformation is expected of men becoming shamans and is sanctioned by their culture.

Soft shamans emerged in the Paleolithic era (2,500,000–10,000 B.C.E.) particularly among the **Chukchee**, **Koryak**, Kamchadal, Asiatic **Eskimos**, and throughout much of northeast Asia. These **gender-variant** shamans represented for their communities a sphere of spiritual **powers** that exists beyond the male-female polarity. In dress, behavior, gender role, sexuality, and spirituality they are androgynous, blending aspects of masculine, feminine, and the **sacred**.

Soft shamans excelled in **shamanism** because their mixed nature allowed a close association with the spirit world. Their power was respected by untransformed shamans. A soft shaman was never treated badly because his **helping spirits** would retaliate on his behalf. See also **gender-variant male**.

Conner, Randy P. *Blossom of Bone: Reclaiming the Connections Between Homoeroticism and the Sacred*. San Francisco: HarperCollins, 1993.

Williams, W. L. *The Spirit and the Flesh*. Boston: Beacon Press, 1992.

Soma

A plant deified in the Vedic text, the *Rig Veda*, by the early Aryan peoples who invaded what is now India. The divine Soma is described as a non-flowering plant with cap and stem that is non-leafy, fruitless, rootless, and grows in the high mountains. It is also described as a powerful **entheogen** that induces **visions** resulting in mental and physical enhancements.

Soma was recently identified as the *amanita muscaria* mushroom, possibly the oldest hallucinogen used by **shamans** to facilitate their entry into **trance**. *Amanita muscaria* is the most prominent **plant hallucinogen** used in the Asiatic region of the world. The Soma of the *Rig Veda* was regarded so highly as to be held holy. The very idea of "deity" may have originated from the entheogenic experiences induced by this **sacred plant**. See also **altered states of consciousness**.

Heinze, R. I. *Shamans of the 20th Century*. New York: Irvington Publishers, Inc., 1991.

Ripinsky-Naxon, M. *The Nature of Shamanism: Substance and Function of a Religious Metaphor*. Albany, NY: State University of New York Press, 1993.

Song

Songs and **chants** are one of the most important tools of the **shaman**. They are used to access spirit power, enter **trance**, empower remedies and cures, and in some cases as a remedy. Songs are sung to cure the sick, to find game, to make crops grow, to confuse enemies, and to aid people in all kinds of trouble or danger.

Through songs the shaman speaks to his or her **helping spirits** and accesses the **power** of that **spirit**. Song is believed to give any voice power, not just the shaman's. The power of the song is not in the **words** themselves since **power songs** do not translate into ordinary speech. The power in a song is in the access it provides to spirit.

In some **cultures** the shaman's song is spontaneous; it comes to the shaman directly from spirit. In other cultures, for example in southwestern **North America**, the songs used are traditional **medicine** songs handed down through **medicine societies**. These songs were originally received from spirit, however that was long ago. In either case, **singing** a power song is not an act of self-expression. It is a act of magic which calls upon the powers of Spirit and Nature to aid the people.

In **rituals** shamans use songs to access power and to contain the **energy** of the ritual. For example, the Wakuénai, a northern Arawakan society in Venezuela, consider **sound** and song to be the very source of shamanic power. In Wakuénai **healing** rituals the shaman uses song to name that which is out of balance within an individual, the social order, and the surrounding natural environment. The shaman then uses a different song to guide the restoration of harmony in those relationships.

Different types of songs can be used to enter different types of **altered states of consciousness**. For example, the Wakuénai recognize both shamans and chant owners. Chant owners use their songs to create a numb, dream-like altered state in which the perception of contrasts is either minimized or shut out entirely. While chanting they travel to the celestial home of the bee **spirits**, which gives chant owners powers of **divination** to detect the presence of sorcerers, locate missing persons or objects, and predict future events.

In contrast, the songs of the Wakuénai shaman are intended to awaken the senses and heighten the

shaman's sensitivity to contrasts. Using songs and hallucinogenic snuff shamans travel to *íyarudáti*, the **Land of the Dead** where the dangerous spirits and work with lost souls demand an alert and highly sensual altered state.

Shamans also used songs to contribute to the efficacy of remedies. Throughout **South America** the words and song of the *payé* (shaman) are essential to all plant remedies. Shamanic plant remedies derive their healing properties from the biology, from the spirit of the plant itself, and from the song the shaman **sings** into the remedy. From the practitioners' perspective the remedies will have no healing properties if the shaman doesn't sing to them.

Spirits continue to reveal songs to humans in **dreams** or during **vision quests**. These songs (and **dances**) are **sacred** in origin and performing them is a form of **prayer**. These new healing songs, if effective, may be preserved with the culture's traditional healing songs. The performance of these traditional songs may be personal sacred acts or, if the song belongs to a medicine society, a long, complex ceremonial prayer.

Songs are the property of either an individual shaman or a medicine society. In general the songs of the medicine societies describe a desired event in the magic of beautiful speech. Sung or spoken, these complex songs were intended to make the event take place. It is believed that if the description is vivid and the recitation is as it should be at the right time with the right behavior, and on behalf of all the people, the act of singing will make it so.

In cultures where the traditional songs belong to an individual they are handed down, generation to generation, shaman to **apprentice**, or they are purchased. For example, a **Lakota** shaman may spend years learning the songs and **drum** rhythms that go with each spirit. Though the effort is painstaking, it is worth it. The shaman who can master the songs can bring the

spirits into a ritual and hold them there for the duration through the power of the songs and the **rhythm** of the drums. See also **music**.

Langdon, E. Jean, and G. Bear. *Portals of Power: Shamanism in South America*. Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1992.

Schultes, R. E., and R. E. Raffauf. *Vine of the Soul: Medicine Men, Their Plants and Rituals in the Colombian Amazonia*. Santa Fe, NM: Synergetic Press, 2004.

Songlines

Songlines are magnetic, vital forces that naturally emanate from the **earth** and flow, crisscrossing the continent. Aborigines believe that they can project their **psyche** or inner consciousness along these songlines as a means of communicating. In this way **songs**, stories, and **knowledge** are shared over great distances and with people they never meet in person. The knowledge and use of songlines was once a **sacred** tradition that stretched across the entire earth and in this way cultural knowledge was shared worldwide.

For an **Aboriginal** Australian to become a socially responsible adult, he or she must learn the songlines of his or her **dreamtime** region. Knowledge of songlines allows a person to travel over the earth without maps or compasses. They tell those who know the nature of the land, desert, mountains, etc., what the land offers by way of **water** and resources.

Learning the songlines of a place creates an emotional attachment to the spirit of that place. The Dreamtime Ancestors are alive in the land. For example, a jumble of boulders is the Hare Wallaby men because they contain the essence of the Hare Wallaby men, not because the rocks resemble Hare Wallaby men. Learning the songlines connects the human **spirit** to the spirit of the land. See also **Australia** and **storytelling**.

Clanton-Collins, J. "An Interview with Burnam Burnam." *Shaman's Drum* 14 (Fall-Winter, 1988): 29–33.

Parker, K. L., et al. *Wise Women of the Dreamtime: Aboriginal Tales of the Ancestral Powers*. Rochester, VT: Inner Traditions International Limited, 1993.

Sonic Driving

Sonic driving is the use of a monotonous **rhythm** that resonates at three, four, six or eight beats per second to induce **altered states of consciousness**. This is one of many techniques used by **shamans** to enter into their **trance** states. The **sound** may be produced with **drums**, **rattles**, other percussion instruments, like click sticks or hollow logs, **singing**, chanting, a stringed bow, digerido, bells, or Tibetan bowls. The trance response occurs when any of the above are played or sung at the correct frequency.

This frequency facilitates the production of **brain waves** in the low alpha and theta ranges which are related to states of creativity, vivid imagery, and states of **ecstasy**. A link has been shown between this type of shamanic drumming and an elevation in the production of **theta waves** in the brain.

There are four major types of brain wave frequency patterns, as measured by the electroencephalogram (EEG), an instrument that produces drawings of brain wave patterns of humans while they are engaged in various activities. EEG waves are classified according to wave frequency which is measured in cycles per second, or Hertz (Hz)

Delta waves, less than 4 Hz, are associated with sleep or unconsciousness. Theta waves, 4–8 Hz, are associated with the twilight consciousness between waking and sleeping that is difficult to maintain without **training**. Alpha waves, 8–13 Hz, are associated with a conscious state that is alert but unfocused or focused internally—relaxation, and well-being. Beta waves, greater than 13 Hz, are associated with

normal, everyday activities with the focus on the exterior world.

Jeanne Achterberg, Ph.D, author on **shamanism**, explains that it is possible for sonic driving to filter out ordinary awareness and take shamans into trance. The auditory nerves from the ear pass directly into the reticular activation system (RAS) of the brain stem, which is a massive nerve net that functions to coordinate sensory input and motor tone. The RAS also alerts the cortex to incoming information. Strong repetitive sound becomes strong repetitive neural firing in the brain. This strong, repetitive neural firing could compete successfully for cognitive awareness in the cerebral cortex. Successful competition would filter out **ordinary reality** stimuli and disturb the baseline stabilization of **ordinary consciousness**. The consciousness is then free to expand into altered states.

Humanity may have been using sonic driving as far back as prehistoric times. It is possible that **cave** paintings show us that our **ancestors** used sound, chanting, and **song** as sonic drivers for their **journeys** into the **spirit** realm. Légor Rezinkoff and Michel Dauvois, French archaeologists, surveyed three caves in southwest France by singing as they walked through. They commented on the impact of the stunning resonance. Their research resulted in a resonance map that showed that the cave areas of highest resonance were also most likely to harbor a painting or engraving. See also **chants**.

Achterberg, Jeanne. *Imagery in Healing: Shamanism and Modern Medicine*. Boston: New Science Library/Shambala, 1985.

Arrien, Angeles. *The Four-fold Way: Walking the Paths of the Warrior, Teacher, Healer, and Visionary*. San Francisco: HarperCollins, 1993.

Ingerman, Sondra. *Soul Retrieval: Mending the Fragmented Self Through Shamanic Practice*. San Francisco: HarperCollins, 1991.

Leakey, Richard E. *The Origin of Humankind*. New York: Basic Books, 1994.

Sorcery

Some define sorcery as the use of sympathetic magic for personal gain or malevolent purposes; however others believe that when used properly sorcery can allow one "to taste infinity." The **training** of the **shaman** and the sorcerer are nearly identical. How and why that training is used in the world differs. The sorcerer's path is exclusively the path of personal **power** and liberation.

In practice sorcery is most often manifest as a projectile, like a **tsentsak**, shot into the victim or another object, like a tupicks, sent to attack the victim or an outright act of soul theft. The sorcerer may perform the soul theft with his or her own **spirit** through the victim's **dreams** or through a spirit agent sent by the sorcerer. All of these conditions cause the victim to become ill in some manner and eventually to die, usually by wasting away.

Historically scholars have confused sorcery and **shamanism**, often treating them as the same profession. Sorcery is distinct from shamanism, but in most indigenous **cultures** of South or **North America**, it is accepted—if not expected—from otherwise benevolent shamans. Acts of sorcery practiced as a means of survival, protection, or **healing** of the tribe particularly against outside enemies are appropriate and perceived of as necessary.

Therefore, sorcery can be defined as that which disturbs the natural order of things, that is malevolent in intent and manipulative, but not perforce "evil." Sorcerers are those people who perform acts of sorcery consistently, for personal gain, with disregard for the good of the community as a whole.

In shamanic cultures **illness** is frequently diagnosed as **soul loss** or the presence of an **energy intrusion**. Since both of these conditions can be caused by sorcery, accusations of sorcery are

often associated with illness. However, both conditions can be caused by means other than sorcery. Accusations of sorcery are often leveled when a North American shaman is unsuccessful in healing a patient. However, a shaman's failure to heal is more often the fact that he or she and his or her **helping spirits** are less powerful than the source of the illness and they sincerely cannot prevail.

There is always a price for sorcery, however it is not always apparent what or how high that price is. For example, in **Africa** it is believed that for every power gained through sorcery, or unnatural means, a natural power of the people is lost. When shamans use their power to do harm, it is said that their relationship with spirit becomes polluted. The shaman must decide if the benefit to the community outweighs the cost and whether or not the resulting contamination can be cleansed and the relationship with spirit salvaged for the future.

Consistent, intentional misuse of power cannot be cleansed. The accumulated pollution brings misfortune or a painful death to the sorcerer. However, more often it is the community or the sorcerer's loved ones, who are not as power-filled and protected, who suffer. Even if the sorcerer uses power to keep death at bay, over time the disconnection from a right relationship with spirit means the sorcerer must draw on more and more of his or her own power until there is nothing left but the "perfume of power" that the shaman once had.

Shamans and sorcerers both work with the energies of the visible and invisible worlds. It is the intent of their actions is different. The shaman seeks to restore harmony between the humans and the flow of the Universe for the good of his or her people. The sorcerer seeks personal gain with disregard for the harmony or disruption created relative to the flow of the Universe.

The life's work of a shaman changes and develops over time. In general it is a

path of mastery wherein the shaman's skills and spiritual evolution develop in direct relation to each. All shamanic skills are neutral; the benevolence or malevolence of any act results from the intent through which the shaman sends the act forth. The shaman is usually held by others in a combination of fear and respect because of the ever-present possibility of acts of sorcery. See also **extraction; magical darts; soul retrieval; soul thief**.

Heinze, R. I. *Shamans of the 20th Century*. New York: Irvington Publishers, Inc., 1991.

Lyon, William S. *Encyclopedia of Native American Shamanism: Sacred Ceremonies of North America*. Santa Barbara, CA: ABC-CLIO, 1998.

Mutwa, Credo Vusa'mazulu. *Song of the Stars: The Lore of a Zulu Shaman*. Barrytown, NY: Station Hill Openings, 1996.

Soul

The soul is the animating and vital principle in a person often conceived of as an immaterial entity that survives death. The soul is a living reality, not a belief or tradition. However each **culture** describes the structure of the soul in its own way.

The primary and most universal factor of human existence is the recognition of soul as the experience of a life-giving **energy** that is independent of the body and directs or guides each individual. The existence of a soul and its connection with life before and after death is the ground of all traditional spiritual philosophy.

Soul, for the purposes of this book, is defined as the vital life giving force of the living human—the human spirit. This is to distinguish the soul of the living, for example the soul of the **shaman** or the patient, from the souls of the dead, the **helping spirits** the shaman works with, or the malevolent, misplaced **spirits** the shaman works on.

For example, a shaman's grandmother's life force is referred to as her soul while she is living. Once she is dead and her soul passes on into the spirit world where it re-emerges with the Source. There her soul is referred to as a **spirit**. If her spirit were to return to aid the shaman, it would be an ancestral helping spirit. However, if upon the grandmother's death her soul did not pass on, but stayed in the physical world where it no longer belonged, it would be referred to as a misplaced spirit. See also **ancestors**.

Kalweit, Holger. *Dreamtime and Inner Space: The World of the Shaman*. Boston: Shambhala Publications, 1988.

Wilber, K. *A Brief History of Everything*. Boston: Shambhala Publications, Inc., 2001.

Soul Calling

A variation of a **soul retrieval** healing **ritual** practiced by various shamanic peoples in Asia and **Southeast Asia**. In a standard **soul** retrieval the **shaman** enters the spirit world, locates the lost soul, captures or secures it in some way, and conveys it back to the patient and replaces it in the patient's body. In a soul calling ritual the shaman enters **trance** to talk the soul back, often in **song**, by describing the way back to the body, by enticing the soul back with descriptions of the people and things the soul loves, or by negotiating the return of the soul with the **spirits** who have stolen it.

Hu Plig is the soul calling ritual performed by the **Hmong**. The Hmong conceive of the human soul as a multiple soul and of **illness** as the loss or dispersal of one or more of these soul aspects. In the soul calling ritual the shaman summons the soul aspects that have left the body, whether due to theft or of their own volition, and directs them to return to the body, re-integrate with each other, and restore integrity to

the lifeforce of the body. See also **healing**; **multiple soul belief**; **spirit**.

Conquergood, D., and P. Thao. *I Am a Shaman*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota, 1989.

Soul Catcher

Soul catchers are tools used by **shamans** to aid in the **soul retrieval** process, which is a type of **shamanic healing** ritual. Some of these tools are **power objects** in **ordinary reality** while others exist only in **non-ordinary reality**. Some soul catchers are defined culturally while others are the personal creation of the individual shaman.

Tsimshian shamans of the Nass River region in British Columbia, Canada, use soul catchers carved from hollow bone. These soul catchers are traditionally decorated with a two-headed beast, like a wolf or snake. This mythical beast opens its mouths at either end of the bone while a humanoid face stares out from the center.

Shamans use a variety of other **power** objects as soul catchers. For example, some shamans have soul catchers among the secret objects in their **medicine pouch**. Southeast Asian shamans have a box containing magical objects, including quartz **crystals**, or "stones of light," used in **soul** retrievals. A **Tungus** shaman is reported to have used a noose. See also **ritual**; **soul loss**; **Southeast Asia**.

Ingerman, Sondra. *Soul Retrieval: Mending the Fragmented Self Through Shamanic Practice*. San Francisco: HarperCollins, 1991.

Soul Dance

See **lehstconos** and **Wintun**.

Soul Flight

Soul flight is another term for the shaman's **journey**. The journey and the embodiment **trance** are the two poles of

a continuum of altered states used by **shamans** in their work. The journey is the shaman's experience of his or her **soul** leaving the body and entering the invisible world to join forces with the **helping spirits** there on behalf of the patient or community. **Embodiment** is the shaman's experience of allowing the helping spirits to enter his or her body in the physical world to perform **healing** work for the patient or community through the shaman's body.

The terms journey, soul flight, and spirit flight describe the shaman's experience as his or her soul travels in other realms while in this altered state. For example, it is common understanding among Siberian tribal peoples that the shaman's soul leaves the shaman's body to travel to other parts of the world or to the spiritual realms of the **Kosmos**, typically described as flying up to an upper world, climbing down to a lower world, or swimming down into an underwater realm. See also **altered states of consciousness**.

Soul Loss

Soul loss is a spiritual **illness** that causes emotional, physical, and psychological **disease**. When the **soul** is lost, crucial parts of the individual that provide life and vitality split off and become lost in **non-ordinary reality**. The greater the degree of soul loss the more severe and life threatening the condition. If the soul totally vacates the body, the patient will die.

Soul loss is the gravest **diagnosis** in the shamanic nomenclature. It is seen as a major cause of illness and death and often arises from the demise of relationship with loved ones, career, or other significant attachments. Soul loss manifests in despair, immunological damage, cancer, and a host of other very serious disorders.

In Central and North Asia there are several conceptions of the cause of illness, but soul loss is by far the most widespread. The shamanic people of this area attribute disease to the soul

having strayed away or been stolen. The **shaman** is called on to find the lost soul, capture it, and convince it to return to the patient's body. In these **cultures**, only the shaman recognizes that the soul has fled, and is able to overtake it in non-ordinary reality and return it to the body of the patient. This **healing** ritual is called **soul retrieval**.

From the shaman's perspective, the human soul is an undifferentiated **energy** that enters the body at birth. The soul transcends the individual, existing before birth and after death. It is the nature of the soul to flow, undifferentiated, like a river of life force in the body.

At the moment of soul loss the part that splits off becomes differentiated, assuming the age, emotions, pain, details, and distortion of the experience. That fragment of life force energy, the soul part, crystallizes around this information, solidifying like a rock and no longer flowing like a river. In this form the life force energy is no longer available to the individual.

Soul loss is an adaptive strategy. It can be caused by whatever a person experiences as traumatic relative to his or her soul, even if another person would not experience it as such. When a person experiences trauma, a part of his or her vital essence separates in order to survive the experience by escaping the full impact of the pain. Normally, as the individual deals with manageable amounts of pain over time the vital essence eventually reconnects and the person "gets over it."

However, when the pain is so overwhelming or the fear so terrifying, or the person is unable to deal with manageable amounts of pain for lack of support or skills, the vital essence is lost. In the case of abuse, the single experience alone may be tolerable, but the cumulative effect of these experiences over time is more than the soul can take. The incident becomes "the straw that breaks the camel's back" and the vital essence is lost.

When the soul part slips into non-ordinary reality and out of time, it

becomes lost or stuck. This leaves a hole in the soul that remains within the body in **ordinary reality**. Many addictions and habitual behavior patterns can be seen as coping mechanisms for living in a state of soul loss. They are attempts to gather energy to fill the hole created by the soul's leaving.

The primary reasons for soul loss in the past are: soul theft by a sorcerer, magician, or wandering **spirit**, straying from the body and getting lost, particularly while **dreaming**, and being frightened or living in chronic fear.

The primary reasons for soul loss today include all of the above. However theft by a skilled practitioner of magic is much less common because those skilled enough to steal a soul are less common. Soul parts can be lost through trauma (a single experience) including loss of a loved one, divorce, surgery, accident, illness, miscarriage, abortion, rape. Soul parts can be lost through abuse (a pattern of traumatic experiences that repeat in a pattern over time) including physical, sexual, psychological, or spiritual abuse, incest, abusive intimate relationships, the stress of combat, addiction, and cultural conditioning. In some cases individuals give their soul parts away due to behavior patterns set up by chronic low self-esteem, shame, and sense of self as a victim.

Possible symptoms of soul loss include feelings of chronic depression, alienation, a hole or incompleteness, **emptiness**, being cut off from a deep connection with life, or living a life that is without meaning or purpose. These feelings may be experienced as intense suffering or as a dull chronic ache masked by drug and alcohol use, entertainment, compulsive sex, or other addictions. However, an active addiction can be both the sign of the original soul loss and a reason for further soul loss, for example, an overdose is extremely traumatic for the soul.

There is a distinction between a lost soul and a lost soul part. A lost soul leaves the patient weak and vulnerable,

without the vital force needed to live. The patient will die in a number of days or weeks if the soul is not brought back. It takes a severe trauma or a skilled **soul thief** to truly damage a soul to this degree.

A lost soul part is a fragment of the soul. The absence of a part may go basically unnoticed as anything more than a sudden mood, attitude, or behavioral change. Though the patient has died a bit inside, literal death from a lost soul part is not eminent. However, soul loss makes an individual vulnerable to further soul loss. The cumulative effects of several lost soul parts can evolve into a state similar to that of the lost souls described above.

Both situations are life threatening, though in different time frames. They are both more significant than psychological dissociation or the dissociation of an aspect of the personality. Soul loss is literal damage to the inviolate core that is the essence of the person's being. It is not a psychological metaphor.

Prominent Jungian analyst Marie Von Franz wrote that soul loss can be observed today in the everyday lives of the human beings around us. Loss of soul appears in the form of a sudden onset of apathy and listlessness and the feeling that joy has gone out of life, initiative is crippled, life is empty, "I" am empty, and everything seems pointless. See also **ritual**.

Achterberg, J. "The Wounded Healer: Transformational Journeys in Modern Medicine." *Shaman's Path: Healing, Personal Growth, and Empowerment*. Boston: Shambhala Publications, 1988.

Eliade, Mircea. *Shamanism: Archaic Techniques of Ecstasy*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1964.

Ingerman, Sondra. *Soul Retrieval: Mending the Fragmented Self Through Shamanic Practice*. San Francisco: HarperCollins, 1991.

Way, A. G. *Soul Recovery and Extraction*. Cottonwood, AZ: Blue Turtle Publishing, 1993.

Soul Retrieval

Soul retrieval is the process by which the **shaman** enters **non-ordinary** reality to track and retrieve lost **souls**, or soul parts, for a patient who has experienced **soul loss**. The soul retrieval process is the most difficult and dangerous of the shaman's tasks. The following steps, observed in Siberian soul retrieval **rituals**, describe the soul retrieval process.

1. The shaman connects with a **helping spirit** and enters his or her working **trance** state, thus entering non-ordinary reality.
2. The shaman discovers the cause of the **illness** and where the soul of the sick person can be found (**divination**).
3. The shaman finds the lost soul in non-ordinary reality with the help of the helping spirits and returns with it to the ritual space.
4. If necessary the shaman drives out the **spirit** of the illness from the patient's body (**extraction**), as indicated by the helping spirits.
5. The shaman returns the lost soul to the patient's body, usually by blowing it into the patient's heart and the top of the head.
6. The shaman thanks the helping spirits for their assistance, exits the trance state, reenters **ordinary reality**, and closes the ritual space.

After the soul part is returned to the patient's body, it is traditional to recount some of the events that occurred in the shaman's **journey**. In some **cultures** the shaman is expected to report or narrate the events as they unfold in the journey. The dynamics of the journey further explain the exact nature of the soul damage and what the patient will now need to do to complete the **healing** and reintegration of the lost soul.

There is a traditional relationship between soul retrievals and extractions. Soul loss creates a hole in the patient's soul which leaves the individual vulnerable. **Spirit intrusions** and other illness-inducing energies can enter that hole. Therefore, it is often necessary to take

out what has filled the hole in the soul before placing the soul part back in it.

Some practitioners can perform soul retrievals long distance, without actually being in the physical presence of the patient. In this case the shaman tracks the soul part, secures it, and then travels through the **Middleworld** to the patient, while still in the journey, to return the lost soul parts.

Sandra Ingerman, shamanic healer and author of *Soul Retrieval*, explains that where lost soul parts go is crucial information for the shaman to succeed in the soul retrieval. From a shamanic perspective, the soul parts go to a specific place in non-ordinary reality where they exist out of linear time. These soul parts are not simply aspects of the personality which split off, or dissociate, and get lost in the undifferentiated, no-man's land of the unconscious. They are specific energies in a specific place which can be accessed in the **altered state of consciousness** of the shaman's journey.

Scholars have discussed possible reasons why the shamans of different cultures, for example Siberian and Indonesian shamans, journey to the same three places for soul retrievals. They suggest that the places either originate in the religious traditions in the heart of the same people or that the different religious traditions belong to different cultures who met and joined within one culture. However, practitioners explain that the commonality is a result of simply following the souls to where they go when they are lost or taken. In soul retrieval work the shaman must go to wherever and whenever the soul part is waiting in non-ordinary reality as directed by his or her helping spirits.

The Role of Helping Spirits

Helping spirits of all kinds help the shaman locate lost souls in non-ordinary reality and successfully retrieve them. If the lost soul was stolen by **spirits of the dead**, helping spirits are dispatched by the shaman to bring the

souls back to the shaman, who will then complete the retrieval. However, if the shaman determines that the soul was stolen by malevolent spirits then the retrieval is considered more difficult. The shaman journeys with his or her helping spirits, working together to track, secure, and retrieve the lost soul.

Once the soul is found, the shaman may be forced to use trickery, theft, or engage in battle to get the soul away from the malevolent spirit or other **soul thief**. At times it is the lost soul itself that doesn't want to return. In this case the shaman may barter, cajole, or trick the lost soul into returning.

For **contemporary shamans**, soul loss is often caused by loved ones engaged, unintentionally, in soul-damaging behavior. In these cases, the perpetrator is usually passing on patterns of abuse that were inflicted on them. The patient often has compassion for their perpetrator and trickery or battle with the perpetrator may upset the patient. Persuasion, debate, and engendering trust are often the appropriate course of action.

In these cases the soul part may not want to return. The shaman explains that the situation has changed and/or that the part is now an adult in ordinary reality. Learning that they are out of danger and/or free to act on their own behalf as adults, soul parts are usually willing to attempt a return.

Tools of the Trade

The essential tool for soul retrieval is the shaman's journey. The **drum** and **rattle**, basic tools for supporting the journey, are therefore the basic tools for soul retrieval. Some shamans also take **soul catcher** tools into their journeys specifically for soul retrieval. Some of these tools are defined culturally while others are the personal creation of individual shamans.

Soul catchers are used by shamans of the Nass River region in British Columbia, Canada. Soul catchers are carved from a hollow bone and usually decorated with a two headed beast, like

a wolf or snake. This mythical beast opens its mouths at either end of the bone while a humanoid face stares out from the center.

Shamans use a variety of **power objects** as soul catchers. Some shamans have objects that aid them in soul retrievals among the secret objects in their **medicine pouches**. Southeast Asian shamans have a box containing magical objects, including quartz **crystals** or "stone's of light." A **Tungus** shaman is reported to have used a noose. Some of these tools are power objects in ordinary reality while others exist only in non-ordinary reality.

Integration

When the shaman returns the lost soul part to the patient, the source of problem is resolved at the level of spirit. Then the shaman must facilitate the process of resolving the original reason the part left and restoring harmony between the patient and the soul part. If the soul loss was recent then the integration process is relatively simple and harmony restores itself. If the soul loss occurred in the past, not only does the original trauma need to be expressed and released, but the behavior patterns formed to cope with the soul loss must be replaced with healthier behavior patterns.

The behavior patterns formed to cope with living in a state of soul loss occur on three levels. The first level is at the patient's core where the hole was left in the soul. Right after a soul part leaves, the individual must begin protective behavior to guard the hole from intrusions. These behavior patterns effect the person's ability to express and receive intimacy.

The second level is composed of patterns of behaviors the individual engages in to fill the hole. These behaviors are habitual, compulsive, or addictive. They may fill the hole temporarily or they enable the person to enter an altered state in which they feel as if the hole is filled for the duration of the altered state.

The third layer of behavior is the chronic repetition of the original trauma. The hole carries the shape, or resonance, of the original trauma in the same way that a puzzle holds the shape of a piece that has been removed. The resonance of the trauma, still within the body, attracts new versions of the original trauma. In this way the patient chooses to repeat the pattern, again and again, until the lost soul part is retrieved.

These behavior patterns are chronic stresses on the individual's well-being. They affect the physical, psychological, emotional, and spiritual health if the individual as well as how he or she perceives of the world (mental-philosophical), how he or she relates with others (social-ethical), and how he or she relates to herself (moral).

In soul loss and the sicknesses or death arising from it, healing is available through the shaman's journey, the **power** of the helping spirits, and the cleverness of the shaman herself. The shaman sees the soul, its form, and its destiny. Where the shaman is at hand and the fate of the soul is the issue. The shaman guards the soul of the community and the souls of the individuals within the community. See also **shamanic healing** and **Southeast Asia**.

Eliade, Mircea. *Shamanism: Archaic Techniques of Ecstasy*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1964.

Heinze, R. I. *Shamans of the 20th Century*. New York: Irvington Publishers, Inc., 1991.

Ingerman, Sondra. *Soul Retrieval: Mending the Fragmented Self Through Shamanic Practice*. San Francisco: HarperCollins, 1991.

Waya, A. G. *Soul Recovery and Extraction*. Cottonwood, AZ: Blue Turtle Publishing, 1993.

Soul Substance

A substance carrying the unique vibrational signature of the **soul** adheres to all things which have been in contact

with the soul. Soul substance adheres in particular to fingernails, hair, excrement, and saliva. These can be used for a variety of different kinds of diagnostic purposes for the person in question. They can also be used as ingredients in acts of **sorcery** intended to harm that person.

Kalweit, Holger. *Dreamtime and Inner Space: The World of the Shaman*. Boston: Shambhala Publications, 1988.

Soul Thief

A soul thief is a person or **spirit** who steals the **soul**, or soul parts, of others. Traditionally, soul thieves are sorcerers or magicians, who are skilled in the magical manipulation of the soul, or malevolent **spirits** and **spirits of the dead**, who are able to pull the souls of the living into the spirit realm. Soul theft leaves the victim in a state of **soul loss**.

Soul theft by a practitioner of magic is less common today, as are skilled sorcerers and magicians able to perform it. However, the theft of soul parts is quite common. Soul parts are often stolen unintentionally in divorces, abusive or dysfunctional relationships, relationships with the chronically ill, and by exhausted parents. Rapists, child molesters, and people who prey on others of lesser **power**, rank, or privilege are often soul thieves.

Sound

Sound is the movement or vibration of **energy** moving at vibrations per second within the auditory range. Sound is an essential aspect of shamanic work. **Shamans** use **rhythm** and percussion, **song** and **chant**, **music** and instruments, and **silence** and meditation. Sound is used by shamans to access spirit **power**, enter **trance**, induce trance in the patient, empower remedies and cures, and as a remedy in and of itself.

The body is affected differently by different sounds. In particular, **shamanism** makes use of the fact that the body responds to repetitious sounds occurring at 6 to 8 beats per second by altering its ordinary state of consciousness. In this way shamans have used **drums** and percussion to induce journeying trance states for 40,000 years.

Percussive sound, probably accompanying chanting or dancing, appears to be the oldest form of music. Though drums are not found in excavations, it is assumed that this is due to the rapid degeneration of wood and hide. Excavations do reveal bullroars, bone and ivory flutes, whistles, and **rattles** of strung beads or bone scrapers and **rock art** depicting the use of drums along with these other instruments.

Shamans understand that the human body responds to sound in a myriad of ways. There is evidence that certain sounds and rhythms affect both our physical and spiritual well-being. Positive physical health effects related to sound have been shown in contemporary medical studies involving meditation, the repetition of **mantras**, and the cultivation of silence.

Yet indigenous peoples have a much more fully developed understanding of the use of sound in **healing** that extends all the way back to the beginning of time to the original **Ancestors**. The creation stories of indigenous peoples around the world explain that in the beginning was the Sound, and the Sound was the sound of **Spirit** who caused the world of matter to take form. Sound is associated with the essential Ether out of which the other **elements**: **Air**, **Fire**, **Water**, and **Earth** unfolded during the **evolution** of the universe.

Lao-tzu, philosopher of the Tao, speaks of the Great Tone that is "the tone that goes beyond all usual imagination," and the Hindu speak of Nada Brahma, the tone from which God made the world. Religious scholars have searched for centuries for the word that the Christian God spoke that created the world.

Similarly, our **language** reflects the ancient idea that a person, like his universe, is created from a tone. Musicologist and writer, Hoachim-Ernst Berendt, observed that the Latin term *personare* means “to sound through something.” Thus the person is as the shaman sees him, a body through which the sound of a **soul** resonates. See also **journey** and **sonic driving**.

Dossey, Larry. “The Body as Music.” *UTNE Reader* 68 (March–April 1995), 81–82.

Harner, Michael J. *The Way of the Shaman*. San Francisco: Harper-Collins, 1990.

Meadows, Kenneth. *Earth Medicine: Revealing Hidden Teachings of the Native American Medicine Wheel*. Boston: Element Books, 1996.

Redmond, L. *When the Drummers Were Women: A Spiritual History of Rhythm*. New York: Three Rivers Press, 1997.

South

The south is a directional **energy** used by **shamans** in their **ritual** work and the creation of **sacred space** within ordinary **space**. The south is one of six directional energies (**east**, south, **west**, **north**, above, and below) who together define the location of the seventh point, the center. Shamans must remain aware of their center at all times to keep from becoming lost while traveling in the boundless and ever-changing realms of **non-ordinary reality**.

Each of the directions is associated with an element, a season, time of day, **colors**, animals, deities, etc. These associations show both consistency and variation across **cultures**. The energy of the south is quick, physical, sensual, and rapid fire. For many cultures, though not all, the element associated with the south is **fire**, the season is summer, the time is day, the **life cycle** passage is the elder, carrier of **knowledge**, the **power** is love, and the **journey** is one of **purification** and growth through

lessons of innocence, faith, passion, and release.

South America

South America is a continent of vast and enormous natural wonders. These natural wonders are powerful spiritual forces in the **shamanism** of the continent. Thus, **shamans** in the Andes work in deep relationship with the **spirits** of those mountains and shamans in **Amazonia** work with the spirits of the rain forest and the plethora of **plant medicines** it offers.

South America is home to shamans who, like those of the **Q'ero** and the **Shuar**, have lived relatively untouched by the outside world until just a few decades ago. In contrast, across the continent in Brazil, there are many spiritist movements, like **Candomblé** or **Santo Daime** doctrine, that have merged the **trance** techniques of indigenous people with African and European **religions**.

Power distinguishes the South American shaman from ordinary people as it does around the world. In South America power is acquired through the mastery of ecstatic **altered states of consciousness**, the acquisition of **helping spirits**, and the acquisition of **power songs**.

The shaman's ability to mediate with the spirit world and affect change in the physical world defines his or her power. Many different techniques are used like the extensive energetic **training** of the **Q'ero**, the drumming trances of the **Mapuche**, or the **dreaming** work of the **Avá-Chiripá**. In much of Amazonia plant **entheogen** are the most common means to enter ecstatic states and **ayahuasca** or **yagé** is the most frequently used.

Throughout South America the plant entheogens are believed to have spirit power in and of themselves. *Ayahuasca* in particular is considered a shaman. It has its own force, power, will, and **knowledge**. It is known to enter the bodies of the initiates and patients who drink it and to inspire altered state

experiences in which they heal without the intervention of the shaman.

It is prevalent in South America for shamans to be paid for their services. In many **cultures** it is expected that the helping spirits will determine the appropriate sacrifice on a sessions by sessions basis. The patient's sacrifice completes the cycle of energy opened in the spirit world by the shaman on the patient's behalf. If payment is not made the illness itself will remain vital and able to enter other people or the helping spirits may harm the shaman. See also **Andes, South America; drum; ecstasy; medicine; Quechua; spirit.**

Langdon, E. Jean, and G. Bear. *Portals of Power: Shamanism in South America*. Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1992.

Southeast Asia

South Asia is defined by a massive arc of mountain ranges that separates it from Afghanistan and Iran to the west and from Central Asia and Tibet to the north. Vast oceans define the southern and eastern parameters. Thousands of dialects of the main **language** families are spoken and several of the world's principal racial types are represented in this region.

The religious life of people in Southeast Asia is extremely complex. Buddhism, Hinduism, Confucianism, Daoism, Shintoism, and regional forms of Islam and Christianity are practiced formally while daily life is filled with spirit **possession, exorcism, shamans, sorcerers, oracles, spirit mediums, energy healers, and various other practitioners who use trance states.** The lay population is both religious, following one of the above formal doctrines, and spiritual, turning to shamans and **seers** to assist with the influence of demons, deities, and **spirits** on their health and livelihood.

Two of the world's major **religions** developed in South Asia: Hinduism and Buddhism, which sprang from

Hinduism in 1000 B.C.E. retaining some ideas and innovating others. Both religions greatly affected the shamanic **rituals** and practices of the indigenous peoples. Buddhism exists alongside Hinduism in **Nepal**, is the major religion of Sri Lanka, and has all but died out in India.

Across the region the shamanism of the indigenous people has been deeply affected by religious and governmental centers of power. Nonetheless, shamanism adapts and is still practiced across the region among, for example, the **Tamang, Hmong, Koreans, Indonesians, and Malay.** See also **Daoism (Taoism); Korea; sorcery.**

Vitebsky, Piers. *The Shaman*. London: Little, Brown and Company, 1995.

Space

The **shaman** is often described as "a master of both worlds." In practice this means that the shaman is able to be in everyday space and non-ordinary space simultaneously. In everyday space the shaman is bound by the laws of physics. In **non-ordinary reality** the shaman enters the multi-dimensional reality of the spirit world and is no longer bound by the laws of physics.

The shaman cultivates this ability through developing a mastery of altered states. Shamans must be lucid and active while in the **altered state of consciousness** to be able to move **energy** from the infinite dimensions of the spirit world into the three dimensions of the physical world and vice versa.

While the everyday world is permeated by **spirits**, they do not have form in the everyday world. Since they have no form they are hard to move because they are hard to contain or hold. The shaman uses altered states to enter the space where spirits and intrusive energies have form. Different altered states give shamans access to different spaces in non-ordinary reality and to the different spirits who inhabit them.

Some physical places are both ordinary and non-ordinary spaces. These

physical spaces contain naturally occurring portals which allow mortals and spirits to pass between the worlds. These power spots are highly valued by shamans as passages to the otherworld and as sources of rejuvenating energies.

Physical spaces, like power spots, serve to remind us that the multi-dimensional realms of the spirit world are not geographically removed from the everyday world. All the worlds occupy the same physical space, but the spirit world spaces are only accessible to some of us some of the time. To gain access humans must enter altered states of consciousness. The mastery of these altered states comes with great effort, personal sacrifice, and skill. However it is through this that the shaman becomes "a master of both worlds." See also **sacred space** and **time**.

Eliade, Mircea. *Shamanism: Archaic Techniques of Ecstasy*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1964.

Matthews, John, et al. *The Celtic Shaman: A Handbook*. Rockport, MA: Element Books Ltd., 1991.

Vitebsky, Piers. *The Shaman*. London: Little, Brown and Company, 1995.

Spells

Spells are magical **incantations** that govern the behavior of the target for better or for worse. Spells can be cast on others or on oneself. Spells are usually cast with intention, however they can be cast unconsciously. Malevolent spells are problematic suggestions of what the target of the spell can and cannot do that manipulate his or her actions. Benevolent spells, also called **blessings** or **prayers**, are non-problematic and often empowering suggestions that also manipulate the actions of the target.

Spiral

The spiral, an ancient symbol of the **sacred**, is found carved into and painted

on stones, homes, **power objects**, and shamanic **paraphernalia** on every continent. In general the spiral represents the earth's **womb**, a core image of the wisdom and the life force inherent in the **earth**.

In Neolithic Europe the spiral represented the flow of **energy** from the earth, through the cycle of life and back to the earth. That sacred cycle is physical and spiritual, solar and lunar, feminine and masculine, and of death and rebirth.

The spiral can represent different ideas depending on how, and in what context, it is used. For example, the **Zulu** use a single spiral to represent the heat and force the high **shaman** can harness for **healing** people. A double spiral is a symbol of rebirth, called "the Path of the Many Returns." Rebirth itself is a symbol of the secret road between the stars that was taken by humans between earth's and other solar systems.

The spiral represents the path of the **soul** from the unknown point of origin in the cosmic womb to the point of return in the Hereafter. The spiral describes the infinite process of life that resonates with the vibrations and **rhythms** of the **Kosmos**, moving from and returning to The Source.

The spiral is related to the labyrinth which represents a path to the Center and, in a mystical sense, to the Source. Death and a return to The Source is the objective of the shaman's **initiation** journey and the terrain of every **journey** thereafter. The shaman's conception of the labyrinth as a return to the womb of the Source has been demonstrated by anthropological field research.

Mutwa, Credo Vusa'mazulu. *Song of the Stars: The Lore of a Zulu Shaman*. Barrytown, NY: Station Hill Openings, 1996.

Redmond, L. *When the Drummers Were Women: A Spiritual History of Rhythm*. New York: Three Rivers Press, 1997.

Ripinsky-Naxon, M. *The Nature of Shamanism: Substance and Function of a Religious Metaphor*. Albany, NY: State University of New York Press, 1993.

Spirit

Spirit is the animating and vital principle often conceived of as an immaterial entity that survives death. It is experienced as a life-giving **energy** that is independent of form and directs or guides the being it enlivens.

With our present tools, science can neither prove nor disprove the existence of spirit. Nor is it within the scope of this book to continue this debate. However, to understand **shamanism**, a working definition of spirit is necessary. In this volume, spirit describes the vital energies and entities **shamans** work with in the invisible world. **Soul** describes the vital energy of a living human, in particular. Spirit and soul both have form in the invisible world, and are therefore, real to the shaman.

From the perspective of a shaman working with a patient, **spirits** are either helpful or harmful. The interaction of a human with helpful spirits can create greater harmony and well-being and is a source of wisdom and **healing** power. However, even helpful spirits may appear malevolent under certain conditions, for example, when their messages are unheeded or rejected.

Harmful spirits are usually misplaced, not malevolent, like **spirits of the dead** who remain attached to the living or souls of the living who are lost in the **Land of the Dead** before their time. Other spirits are vengeful or malevolent, often because an act of **sorcery** has engaged them in a malevolent mission. Interaction with harmful spirits can create disorientation, disharmony, **illness**, and possibly death.

For the most part, spirits are neutral and formless. Some spirits take a physical form like a human, a place, a lake, or a mountain. Other spirits inhabit different forms in the physical world, for

example **ancestor** spirits who were human may take the form of a rock or an animal. Other spirits may take the form of beings that no longer exist in the physical world like gods, goddesses, and mythical beasts, like dragons and dinosaurs.

Through spirit the shaman makes a Connection-to-all-things. Spirit is the shaman's way into the unquantifiable **Emptiness**, the Unknown. Held in this way, all spirit is a manifestation of Divine Spirit. When used in this transcendent sense, Spirit will be capitalized. See also **interdependence** and **Kosmos**.

Wilber, K. *A Brief History of Everything*. Boston: Shambhala Publications, Inc., 2001.

Spirit Boat

The Spirit Boat is a **shamanic healing** ritual used by a group of **shamans** to retrieve the lost **soul** of a person who is suffering from **soul loss**. This technique is used when the lost soul has been stolen by the **spirits of the dead** and taken to the **Land of the Dead**. The **ritual** is used by shamans of **Australia**, the Upper Amazon, and the northwest coast of **North America** when the **power** of more than one shaman is necessary to retrieve the lost soul.

This particular **healing** ritual was highly developed among the people of the Puget Sound region. Each tribe had its own name for this ritual, for example Chinook call the ritual *qlaqewam* and the Snuqualmi call it *sbededaq*, but in practice these rituals are very much the same. The form of the ritual and the participation of more than one shaman are both a response to the danger to the shaman involved in retrieving a lost soul from the spirits in the Land of the Dead. However, if the shaman does not go, the patient will become ever weaker, lose everything, and eventually die.

In the Pacific Northwest, the Spirit Boat ritual is held in a house where invited guests and friends gather. The

ritual begins at sundown and will last for up to four days. The sick person is placed on a pallet in a corner of the room. Three to four shamans take their places in the center of the room in the “boat,” each armed with a long pole, or *touchtd*. The friends gather around, **rattle** and beat the **drums**. The shamans begin to **sing** their **power songs**.

The shamans begin movements with the poles, as though they are propelling and paddling the boat along. The **helping spirits** begin to join them and the shamans gradually enter their **trance**. This continues all night as the shamans travel in their boat to the Land of the Dead, searching for the lost soul.

The shamans will encounter at least nine familiar locations as they travel through the **Lowerworld** to the Land of the Dead. Some of these locations are dangerous. The shaman who spots the danger sings his power **songs** to announce it. If one of the shamans falls into the stream or is caught off guard by the dangers in the **journey**, the corresponding shaman in **ordinary reality** will drop dead in the middle of the ritual. This is interpreted as a severe loss of **spirit** power.

Once the lost soul is located, the struggle in the Lowerworld can last a day and a half. To prevail a shaman must stay connected to his helping spirit and possess an unusually strong will. If this first rescue attempt is unsuccessful, the patient will die and the shaman may die.

When the shamans have prevailed and the lost soul is secured, they must retrace their path to return safely from the Lowerworld. When the shamans have returned to the room in ordinary reality, sometimes a full four days later, the sick man is lifted into the “boat” with the shamans. Together, using all their remaining strength, the four shamans lift the soul of the patient, place it on his body, and force it if necessary back into the body in which it belongs. The ritual is then complete and

the patient will recover quite quickly. See also **soul retrieval**.

Lyon, William S. *Encyclopedia of Native American Shamanism: Sacred Ceremonies of North America*. Santa Barbara, CA: ABC-CLIO, 1998.

Vitebsky, Piers. *The Shaman*. London: Little, Brown and Company, 1995.

Spirit Canoe

The Spirit Canoe, or **Spirit Boat**, is a **shamanic healing** ritual used to retrieve a lost **soul** for a person who is suffering from **soul loss**. The technique is used for **healing** or **divination** by the people of **aboriginal Australia**, the upper Amazon, and the northwest coast of **North America**. See also **ritual**.

Spirit Flight

See **journey** and **soul flight**.

Spirit Hands

Spirit hands refers to the helping spirit's hands, paws, hooves, etc., working through the shaman's own hands in **extraction** work and other hands-on **healing**. The shaman experiences expanded sensory awareness and **powers** to heal while in **trance**. See also **helping spirits**.

Spirit Intrusions

Spirit intrusions are complex **energy intrusions**, which are considered **spirits of the dead** (deceased humans) or some other malevolent spirit or minor deity. The **diagnosis** of the true nature of a spirit intrusion depends to some degree on the cultural definitions of the beings of the spirit realms.

The intrusion of a spirit into a living being is considered a spirit **possession**. In this state the intruding spirit will compete with the host for the host's own life force and control of the host's body. Depossession, or **exorcism**, is the

type of extraction used to remove spirit intrusions.

Spirit Lodge

The Spirit Lodge is a shamanic **ritual** performed widely across **North America** for the purposes of **diagnosis, divination**, and to a lesser extent **healing**. Versions of the Spirit Lodge are found in the American Arctic, areas of **South America**, and among the Semang of the Malay Peninsula. This ritual in all of its variations is characterized by a sudden confusion of **spirit** voices that can be heard by everyone within the ritual space, the shaking of the tent and/or other objects in the ritual space, and the magical liberation of the **shaman** from restraints with which he was bound in the beginning of the ritual.

The spiritual beliefs and ritual elements that make up the Spirit Lodge practice constitute a complex whole. It is performed by shamans primarily of the **Eskimo** peoples across the Arctic and indigenous peoples throughout North America from the northeastern woodlands to the Plains and Plateau regions. Though it is not present in all **cultures**, the Spirit Lodge practice is clearly widespread. The different ritual elements of the practice occur in a fixed order that is surprisingly consistent given its vast dispersion and clearly delineates this as a unitary practice among other shamanic performances.

The ritual is used for diagnosis and divining remedies for illness, seeing the future or the movement of enemies, locating game and lost objects, and communicating with the deceased. In particular the ritual is used to capture the free soul of a sorcerer and to force that sorcerer to cease all malevolent acts causing illness, death, and injury to others. In addition to its literal functions, participation in the ritual reaffirms the powerful presence of **spirits** in the lives of those people.

Performing the Spirit Lodge requires levels of **power** and skill that can only be mastered by shamans with a great deal of personal power, maturity, and a

strong working relationship with powerful **helping spirits**. The practice is primarily one of divination in which spirit flight is not as important as the presence of the spirits and the accurate interpretation of the communication with those spirits.

There is some scholarly debate as to the exact nature of the shaman's **trance** state during the Spirit Lodge ritual. However, the activities of the shaman, **singing**, rattling, and drumming, to induce trance and the wide range of **power displays** that result from the shaman's trance clearly distinguish the Spirit Lodge ritual as an ecstatic performance.

There are many displays of spirit power, witnessed during a typical Spirit Lodge ritual. When it is performed in a tent, the tent shakes, often violently, throughout the ritual. The top of the lodge, regardless of the structure, fills with voices and shining lights with no apparent origin other than spirit. In response to spontaneous questions posed by the audience, complex answers come through the shaman, whole, at a speed quicker than thought. In some cases the **language** of these answers is unintelligible and has to be translated by the shaman.

The shaking of the tent is absent in areas where the cylindrical tent, or **dje-sikon**, is not used for the ritual. When the ritual is performed inside a lodge or home, as with the **yuwipi** of the **Lakota**, the construction of the ritual space does not allow for shaking. Nonetheless, a range of the other signs that spirit power is present are witnessed, like **sounds** of tapping and steps on the ground, objects flying around the room, and the shaman's liberation from his bonds, are characteristic of these versions of the ritual.

In some performances of the Spirit Lodge, the shaman is not only freed from bonds he cannot untie himself, but he is found suspended from the top of the ritual space. Often the suspended shaman hangs precariously from one foot, completely naked.

The spirits who participate with the shaman in the Spirit Lodge rituals varies between cultures and shamans. However the spirits of Nature and spirits from the **Land of the Dead** are the most common in North America. The spirits of Nature are most common in the **east** where Thunder is prevalent as is Turtle, or **Mikenak**, who serves as a go-between with the shaman and the spirit world. The spirits from the Land of the Dead or the **Ancestors**, who often appear as Owl, are prevalent in the Plains. Often the Master/Mistress of the Animals or the Master/Mistress of the Dead is invoked in the ritual, as is prevalent in Eskimo Spirit Lodge performances.

The shaman does not invoke spirit flight into the spirit world during the Spirit Lodge performance, except among the Arctic peoples where the shaman's **journey** is a regular part of this ritual. The function of the ritual is to summon the spirits to answer questions and perform tasks to get information. Therefore the practitioner of the Spirit Lodge is not necessarily a shaman, but may be a conjurer or **seer** with the power and skill to perform the ritual.

Curing during the Spirit Lodge is rare. It is more common to use the ritual to diagnose the cause and treatment of illness. However, when curing does occur it is often because the answer to the question is a healing or the response to a request for healing is an answer or information.

Soul loss is sometimes cured through the Spirit Lodge when the helping spirits summoned for the ritual are able to retrieve the patient's **soul** from the Land of the Dead. Illness caused by the transgression of a **taboo** can be healed in the Spirit Lodge if the patient is able to perform the confessions and amends demanded by spirit for a cure. It is also possible to cure illness caused by **sorcery** through the Spirit Lodge if the helping spirits summoned for the ritual are able to capture the sorcerer's free soul and force the sorcerer to

confess and desist. See also **drum; rattle; Shaking Tent Ceremony**.

Hultkrantz, A. "Spirit Lodge, a North American Shamanistic Séance." In *Studies in Shamanism*. Stockholm: Almqvist and Wiksell, 1962.

Spirit Marriage

Shamans in many parts of the world gain shamanic **power** through marriage to a **spirit** mate in the spirit world. For example, in Burma female shamans marry a male *nat* and male shamans, a female *nat*. The spirit husband or wife becomes a primary helping spirit in the shaman's practice. These spirit marriages not only empower the shaman's **healing** work, but they often produce offspring (spirit) and develop other qualities attributed to ordinary reality marriages.

Sora shamans, who are primarily female, acquire their shamanic powers around puberty through marriage to an underworld spirit. With the aid of this spirit, the girl begins to develop the ability to enter **trance** at will and to **journey** around the **Lowerworld** without fear.

The family tree of Sora spirit marriages serves to pass shamanic power down through the family line. A shaman's spirit husband is the offspring from the union of her predecessor (human) and that predecessor's mate (spirit). The spirit husband is also her spirit brother. The offspring from this union will marry the shaman's successor and so on, effectively accumulating shamanic powers and keeping them in the female lineage.

Though the Sora live a separate life from their Hindu neighbors, some Sora shamans receive their power through marriage to Hindu **spirits**. This creates an interesting re-balancing of powers socially. These Hindu spirits are from high warrior or king castes who wield economic and political power over the Sora and have for centuries. Through spirit marriage that power is accessible to the shaman in **non-ordinary reality**.

Spirit marriage may preclude marriage to a human spouse, depending on the demands of the **helping spirit** to whom the shaman is married. Spirit husbands and wives are quite lusty. They are able to bring their shaman mates to orgasm during **dreams** and trances. However, given the ecstatic nature of the shaman's trance state in general, this is not surprising. The spirit marriage is another way of describing the intimate merging of the shaman's power with that of his or her helping spirit. See also **ecstasy**.

Heinze, R. I. *Shamans of the 20th Century*. New York: Irvington Publishers, Inc., 1991.
Vitebsky, Piers. *The Shaman*. London: Little, Brown and Company, 1995.

Spirit of Fire

See **fire**.

Spirits

In the invisible world the **shaman** experiences the infinite nature of the **Kosmos**; a Kosmos which is alive, ever-expanding, and creative. The Kosmos in its totality is a challenge for the human mind to grasp. Therefore, the shaman enters an altered state of **ecstasy**, so that he or she can experience the true nature of the Kosmos. Even in an **altered state of consciousness**, the shaman's experience is not always easily described or comprehended, particularly by others not in an altered state.

Spirits are one of the ways shamans "see," or give form to, the energies of the invisible world. Just as each human learns to identify a certain **energy** patterns as "tree" and another as "cat" in **ordinary reality**, the shaman must learn identify energy patterns in **non-ordinary reality**. Metaphorically speaking, spirits are tendrils of the Kosmos reaching out to the shaman in forms he or she finds easier to comprehend and communicate to others.

Shamans explain that the experience of **spirit** while in **trance** is an interaction with what is felt to be an intelligent, non-material entity that is separate from the ego or self. Furthermore, this entity may provide information that shamans believe they cannot access alone, without this connection.

Spirits may be seen in the form of an animal or a personage from the past including **ancestors**, gods, goddesses, or other deities. Shamans also see the spirits of nature, of the geography, the **elements**, and mythical creatures, like dragons and griffins. While these forms may be symbolic representations of what a shaman experiences during trance, these trance experiences are real in another dimension. Spirits are pictographic representations of the ineffable in terms the general public can understand.

Piers Vitebsky, author and anthropologist with twenty years of fieldwork with tribal shamans, explains that in the shaman's view of the world all things—the humans, the animals, the **weather**, the elements, the geography—have spirit. Understanding the nature of spirit is a profound theological and psychological problem in any system of beliefs. In shamanic thinking, spirit sometimes seems better translated as the essence of something—what makes an animal an animal, or a **drum** a drum. At other times spirit can be better translated to mean the consciousness of something, like tree consciousness or rocks consciousness, since everything can have a consciousness similar to our own in the shaman's worldview.

Spirit is experienced by shamans in three general ways. It refers to the human spirit, like that of the shaman or the client. It refers to the beings who populate the invisible world who are capable of taking actions that affect humans and other things in the physical world. Spirit also refers to a Divine Spirit, the Spirit of the Kosmos through which the shaman feels a Connection-

to-all-things. Shamans experience spirit to be at times formed, at times formless, and in moments of ecstasy, both everything and nothing. See also **helping spirits**.

Heinze, R. I. *Shamans of the 20th Century*. New York: Irvington Publishers, Inc., 1991.

Kalweit, Holger. *Dreamtime and Inner Space: The World of the Shaman*. Boston: Shambhala Publications, 1988.

Turner, E. "The Reality of Spirits." *ReVision* 15, no. 1 (1992): 28–32.

Vitebsky, Piers. *The Shaman*. London: Little, Brown and Company, 1995.

Spirit Senses

The spirit senses refer to the expanded sensory awareness the **shaman** experiences while in **trance**. This pertains to the shaman's awareness of **non-ordinary reality** while in spirit flight and of **ordinary reality** when the shaman's soul remains here and merges with his or her **helping spirit**.

Similarly, **spirit hands** refers to the helping spirit's hands, paws, hooves, etc., working through the shaman's own hands in **extraction** work and other hands on **healing**. See also **soul flight**.

Spirits of the Dead

Spirits of the dead are the **spirits** of deceased humans who have left the realm of the living and crossed over into **non-ordinary reality** to return to the Source from whence they came. In many **cultures** they then inhabit the **Land of the Dead** while in others they inhabit the rocks, plants, animals, and geography surrounding their descendants.

Shamanic cultures make a clear distinction between people who have only just died, ghosts or haunting spirits, and the spirits of the dead. A ghost is a lost or roaming **soul** who remains with the living longer than is natural, never crossing over and completing its return

to the Source (a general term for where souls come from and return to).

The souls of people who have just died normally linger after death, then complete their **journey** of return to Source. Different cultures have different beliefs about the number of days and why the soul lingers. However, it is generally believed to be normal to linger for three, four, or seven days at the grave site or near the place the soul lived. The soul is not believed to stay longer than it takes the body to begin to decompose.

Souls that successfully complete their journey to the Source are considered spirits of the dead. In some cultures spirits of **ancestors** or loved ones are awaiting to accompany the soul on its journey. In other cultures the soul sets out alone, or with an **animal spirit** guide, after lingering with the living for a few days.

The soul's movement from the physical body into non-ordinary reality represents a temporary state for the soul and is only part of the full transition of death. In this state the soul can enter people and possess them or get lost or distracted from its journey.

Once the soul has completed its return from the life that has just ended, it must pass through further states of existence (reincarnation) in order to develop itself spiritually or dissolve completely (depending on cultural beliefs). Many shamanic cultures believe souls must take on the forms of animals, plants, and places, in addition to human forms, to fully develop spiritually. See also **death and dying**; **helping spirits**; **plant spirits**.

Kalweit, Holger. *Dreamtime and Inner Space: The World of the Shaman*. Boston: Shambhala Publications, 1988.

Spirit Vision

Spirit vision is the ability to see the "**spirits**" or the true nature of things, with and without form. The "spirits" are usually invisible to the untutored eye.

The awakening of spirit vision marks an essential stage in the novice's development of shamanic skills. If necessary a considerable effort may be invested in acquiring and cultivating spirit vision. There are a variety of specific techniques used in different **cultures** to develop spirit vision, some of which are extremely demanding.

Spirit vision is usually cultivated in two stages. The most basic is to catch an initial glimpse of the images and sensations. However, for some individuals this ability is quite natural. Nonetheless, all novices must cultivate the second stage, which is to deepen and stabilize the fleeting images and patterns into a permanent visionary capacity in which the spirits can be seen at will.

In an ordinary state, there is an almost continual flux of images that can be seen when the eyes are closed. In **altered states of consciousness**, these images can become clearer. The meaning and interrelationships between images become more apparent. The shaman's ability to interpret and communicate what he or she experiences in an altered state depends on his or her ability to organize this flux of images into spirits and other meaningful elements. In part, gaining spirit vision is learning to expand the senses while in an altered state. Once the novice has learned to remain conscious while expanding his or her senses, he or she must learn how to interpret the **vision** accurately. The discovery of the meaning of different images can be a long process of trial and error. This process is similar to the way children learn the difference between the floor, table, stairs, **sky** and the dog in the **language** of their parents. The novice must learn through experience to organize the flux of visual images seen during **trances** and to interpret them in accurate and meaningful ways.

Walsh, R. "Shamanic Cosmology: A Psychological Examination of the Shaman's Worldview." *ReVision* 13, no. 2. (1990): 86–100.

Spirit World

See **non-ordinary reality**.

State Shaman

A state shaman uses **trance** states and other shamanic skills on a communal scale in state **rituals** to govern the people as a whole. The state shaman is expected to lead in **ordinary reality** based on his or her connection to **non-ordinary reality**. The state shaman's responsibilities are to manage the universal energies that effect his or her people, maintain the state's harmony with those energies, and in this way, to serve as healer for the people as a whole.

When state shamans occur, they do so in **cultures** where ordinary and non-ordinary reality are inextricably interwoven in the culture's worldview. In such cultures journeying and trance are part of everyday life. The state shaman is expected to gain wisdom in trance from the **ancestors** of the people, particularly past rulers and sages, and to use that wisdom in guiding his or her decisions for the people.

This term was used by Schele and Freidel to describe the *ahau*, or god kings, of the **Maya**. The *ahau* entered a trance state induced by a bloodletting **vision** ritual. In that ritual the *ahau* becomes the *wacah chan*, the central axis or **Tree of Life**, connecting all dimensions of the Maya world, allowing the ancestors to speak, and the gods to materialize in the human world.

China may also have seen the rise of the state shaman in the Zhou dynasty, 1122–256 B.C.E. It is possible that **shamanism** played a strategic role in the development of early Chinese political culture. For the ancient Chinese the **Upperworld** is where all the wisdom is. Those who controlled access to that wisdom had the authority to rule. **Shamans** became a crucial part of every state court; and scholars of **ancient China** agree that the king himself may have functioned as a state shaman. See also **energy** and **journey**.

Heinze, R. I. *Shamans of the 20th Century*. New York: Irvington Publishers, Inc., 1991.

Schele, Linda, and David Freidel. *A Forest of Kings: The Untold Story of the Ancient Maya*. New York: William Morrow, 1990.

Storytelling

Storytelling has been used by the native peoples since the beginning of human time to teach people about **spirit** and their connection to the **sacred**. The native peoples of **North America**, **Australia**, and Lapland, for example, each have a wealth of stories that teach about the sacred, its true nature, and of the people's relationship with this **Great Mystery**.

Storytelling itself is a shamanic act. **Shamans** tell stories to call in particular **animal spirits**, gods, goddesses, or Ancestral heroes and heroines who possess the energies the patient needs to heal. In this way spontaneous stories are crafted to create something new in the patient, a kind of **medicine** to aid the **healing**.

Stories can also be used to reinforce traditions when stability and order are needed to restore balance and harmony. The traditional stories of indigenous peoples contain shamanic imagery that illuminates the obvious, mythic patterns in the situation at hand. Listening to how the characters rise to meet the mythic challenges reminds people that their traditional values can help them to rise above their current troubles.

Clarissa Pinkola Estés, Jungian analyst, author, and award-winning storyteller, explains that hearing a story allows the listener to experience it as though he or she were the heroine/hero who either falters or wins out in the end. "Among storytellers, it is called sympathetic magic—meaning the ability of the mind to step away from its ego for a time and merge with another reality, experiencing and learning ideas there it can in no other form of consciousness and

bringing these back to a consensual reality."

Storytelling becomes a healing process when the story transforms the advice being given. The information given through a healing story is given in a form that becomes inseparable from the **soul** of the listener. Stories weave awareness into the soul. That is why stories can heal when advice is quickly and often forgotten.

Angeles Arrien, a cross-cultural anthropologist, explains that **cultures** transmit their values, **ethics**, history, traditions, and spiritual beliefs through storytelling. Indigenous people who relied on oral traditions in this way trained and developed their memory. The storytellers of these cultures, who were often shamans, had to work for years to precisely memorize the culture's stories. Graduation from one level to the next required flawless recitation of a large body of stories as well as the development of a storytelling style that captured and enchanted the listener.

Storytelling is one of four universal healing salves (dancing, **singing**, and **silence**), which are ways indigenous peoples maintained health and well-being. The inability to be enchanted by stories indicates a state of **soul loss**. See also **ancestors; dance; energy**.

Arrien, Angeles. *The Four-fold Way: Walking the Paths of the Warrior, Teacher, Healer, and Visionary*. San Francisco: HarperCollins, 1993.

Estés, C. P. *Women Who Run with the Wolves*. New York: Ballantine Books, 1992.

Sucking Shaman

A sucking shaman is one who performs **extractions** by sucking the **energy extrusion** from the patient's body. In a majority of **cultures** the sucking shaman sucks and bites the body directly with his or her mouth. In some cultures the **shaman** uses a tool to suck, such as a **cupping horn**, hollow bone or

tube. Energy intrusions are also removed without sucking with **feathers**, hands, or **cleansings**, often depending on the nature of the object needing removal.

In most cultures the intrusion, once removed, is momentarily displayed, then ritually destroyed or sent back to the sorcerer who created it originally. Intrusions are sent into the forest to be absorbed by Nature, thrown into the **fire**, buried in the ground, placed into a bowl of **medicine** water, or left at a cross roads to be devoured by lesser **spirits**. The one exception is the shaman of the **California region** who extract intrusions called "**pains**" and then keep them in their body as a source of **power**. See also **sorcery** and **water**.

Lyon, William S. *Encyclopedia of Native American Shamanism: Sacred Ceremonies of North America*. Santa Barbara, CA: ABC-CLIO, 1998.

Sun

The Sun is a **helping spirit** of great **power** for the **shaman**. In some **cultures** the sun is perceived of as male, for example, *Inti*, of the **Quechua** and, *Etsáa*, of the **Shuar**. In other cultures the Sun is perceived of as female. For example, the Celts associated the Sun with the Goddess and many South American **myths** tell of a female Sun who was assaulted by her brother the **Moon**.

Male or female, or perhaps both, the Sun is a **spirit** being from the **dream-time**. Through relationship with the spirit of the Sun the shaman reconnects to the dreamtime. In an **altered state of consciousness** the shaman can draw power from the Sun to rejuvenate a patient's flagging life force or to re-ignite a spark of life extinguished by a sorcerer. See also **South America**.

Sun Dance

A major spiritual **ritual** that spread across the Plains in the nineteenth century. The Sun Dance was held at

mid-summer by tribes of the Plains, including the Teton, Crow, Ponca, Omaha, Pawnee, Shoshone, and Ute. This **ceremony** involves self-sacrifice rather than the **sacrifice** of others.

At the Sun Dance men offer themselves by dancing for days in the brutal glare of the July **sun**, without **water** or food, calling out for **visions**. A small piece of wood is inserted beneath the dancer's pectorals and attached to long thongs. The dancer is then suspended by the thongs which are attached at the other end to the central Sun Dance tree. The dancers **dance**, looking steadfastly at the sun, until they are released by the tearing of their flesh. In this way they offer a **blood** sacrifice.

Dancers choose to dance to fulfill vows made in time of distress or danger, for **healing** of themselves or their people, or because they are guided to by **spirit**. They are supported by singers who **sing** the Sun Dance **songs** and the **shamans** who conduct the ritual. The secret part of the Sun Dance is carried out in the preparation and the search by the leaders for tree that will become the Sun Dance pole, a symbol of the **Tree of Life**. See also **Lakota**.

Densmore, F. *The American Indians and Their Music*. New York: The Woman's Press, 1936.

Gunn, Allen P. *Grandmothers of the Light*. Boston: Beacon Press, 1991.

Susto

Susto, the Spanish word for "fright," is a common **illness** brought on when experiences of extreme fear, usually fear of punishment or death, create **soul loss**. The symptoms are both mental, anxiety and disequilibrium, and physical, loss of appetite and **energy**. The *payé* (**shaman**) treats both aspects of the illness. He uses tranquilizing plants (Margaritaceae), chanting to call in **spirit** help, and often **trance** states to **journey** to find the frightened **soul** and bring it back to the patient.

Sweat Lodge

The sweat lodge is one of the most widespread traditions for **purification** of the mind and body in indigenous North and Central America. With the exception of the tribes native to the southwestern United States, the sweat lodge was a universal custom practiced by almost every tribe. To sweat is a **sacred** act and the sweat lodge ceremony is usually performed in a sacred context. In this context the **shamans** of many tribes used the sweat as a **healing** tool in their practices.

For example, Maidu shamans from the **California region** used their sweats, *weni otatai*, in different ways to heal different problems. To heal chills or fever, **medicine** was placed in the **water** that turned to steam on the hot rocks, allowing the patient to breathe in the medicine. In treatments of muscle strains the injured area was covered with warm mud and the patient spent the night in the sweat lodge. Paiute shamans from the Basin region used sweats, *tuzinobi*, as a powerful **cleansing** ritual to remove the source of sickness from the patient's body.

The **power** of the sweat in both physical (sweating) and spiritual (praying, chanting, mediation). The sweat lodge is performed as a purification **ceremony** in and of itself. For example, upon the arrival of puberty, to induce a **vision**, before going on a hunt or to war, or after killing an eagle or a human. The sweat lodge was also used as preparation before other **rituals** and ceremonies. For example, an individual would sweat before beginning a **vision quest** or dancing in a **Sun Dance** ceremony.

The sweat lodge is also a means of preventative medicine. In some tribes a sweat could be performed simply to cleanse and refresh, to get rid of all that makes the mind and body feel bad, and to simply rejuvenate and feel good again. Though the performance of the sweat in these situations might appear more casual, the sweat is still a sacred ceremony.

Three Types

There are many different correct ways to construct the lodge, and this varies from **culture** to culture. However, there are three basic ways to bring the heat into the lodge. In the first, stones are heated in a **fire** outside the lodge and then brought in. Water is then poured or sprinkled on the hot rocks producing steam. In the second type the fire is built in the lodge to heat the rocks and then the fire is removed. The hot rocks may be covered with fragrant boughs, but no water is used. In the third type, used primarily in Central America, a duct is used to convey heat from an outside fire into the lodge.

Types of Lodges

In much of **North America** the lodge is constructed on a frame of flexible poles, like willow, that are bent and tied together to form a four to five foot high dome, seating roughly ten to fifteen men. Today the frame is usually covered with blankets or tarps, while traditionally the cover would be found in nature. For example, in the Northeast the cover would be birchbark and in the Plains, buffalo skins.

Far north, the **Inuit** sweat lodge is either a large structure made of cedar planks, called a *kashim*, or the sweat is performed in an igloo. Either way it is central to the spiritual and social life of the village. In the southeast, lodges were dug into the **earth** or into the side of a hill by a stream. For example, the Navajo created an earth-covered, mound structure and framed the entrance with cedar planks. In the California region, the sweat house could serve as a dwelling place and a ceremonial place.

Purification by sweating was also practiced by many of the indigenous peoples who populated Europe and the British Isles. For example the *savusauna* of Finland, still practiced today, is similar to the North American sweat lodge ceremony when used in a sacred way to cleanse the body, mind, and **soul**.

In Central America the Mayan and **Aztec** practices of sweating for purification are continued in *temezcalli*, practiced by the native peoples of Mexico. The name comes from the indigenous Nahuatl **language**, *teme*, to bathe, and *calli* house. The lodges are low huts into which heat is channeled from an outside fire. People enter, crawling one-by-one, through a narrow entrance and squat inside in the darkness. There they pray and **chant** as they sweat.

Inipi

The **Lakota** practice of *inikagapi wójeja*, or **inipi** for short, is the most widespread sweat lodge tradition in North America. The Stone People Lodge, as it is also known, was brought to the Lakota by the **spirit teacher**, White Buffalo Calf Woman, with directions for building the lodge and instructions for using it. If done properly, all the powers of the Universe are brought into play in the ceremony and to the aid of the participants.

Each piece of the lodge and part of the ceremony is connected with a greater power. Where the lodge is placed, the source of the water, the number of sticks, the rocks, the placement of the fire and the wood that is burned, etc., all have meaning and power. The lodge is built on the earth and with materials that grow from the earth. Water is a connection to the Thunderbeings who bring goodness to the people. The rocks bring in the Fire and the **Air** is made apparent in the purifying steam.

Traditionally, every stage of building the lodge is sacred work during which **prayers** are said and pieces are purified. For the Lakota lodge twelve to sixteen willow sticks are placed in a **circle**, bent to create the dome frame, and covered with buffalo skins. The floor of the lodge is covered with sage before entry.

Outside the fire is built and the rocks heated. The hot rocks are passed into the lodge with a forked stick or deer antler and placed in the center. An **altar** is created near the rocks on which the

sacred pipe rests. The altar is often in the shape of a buffalo **skull** with sage placed in the eye sockets.

The leader of the sweat is responsible for sprinkling the rocks with sweet-grass, that fills the lodge with a smoky, fragrance or water, that fills the lodge with steam. Cold water from a spring is set in a bucket by the rocks with either a ladle or a bundle of sage for the leader to use to douse the rocks with water. The leader is also responsible for calling the **spirits** into the lodge to hear the prayers of the participants.

The number of rocks used determines how hot the sweat will be and the number of rounds determines how long. The sacred pipe is passed around clockwise, usually within each round. Traditionally there are four rounds, though not always. When the ceremony is complete, participants may plunge into a river, if nearby, or rub themselves dry with sage. See also **Dineh** and **Maya**.

Bruchac, J. *The Native American Sweat Lodge: History and Legends*. Freedom, CA: The Crossing Press, 1993.

Erdoes, R. *Crying for a Dream: The World Through Native American Eyes*. Santa Fe, NM: Bear & Co., 1990.

Lyon, William S. *Encyclopedia of Native American Shamanism: Sacred Ceremonies of North America*. Santa Barbara, CA: ABC-CLIO, 1998.

Sword

The sword is used by **shamans** in some **cultures** to display their full **embodiment** trance. When the shaman has reached the appropriate depth of **trance**, he or she can slash and stab his or her own body without harm, though the blades are razor sharp. When fully embodying **spirit** the shaman is protected from all harm.

Old accounts tell of Asian shamans dancing up the seven rungs of a **ladder** made of swords as their **soul** journeyed into the spirit world. In the final test of the *kut*, the traditional **initiation** of a Korean **mudang** (female shaman), the

initiate must **dance** barefoot atop a tower of seven balancing layers which culminates in a pair of sharp *chaktu* (heavy, large cleavers) blades. Her success is proof that she has allowed her soul to die and be reborn with the warrior spirit.

In **healings**, swords are brandished by shamans to frighten off malevolent **spirits** during **extractions** and **exorcisms**. The offending spirit is attacked and threatened, often quite violently, and since the spirit is inside of the patient, the patient may be physically harmed in the process.

The *mudang* uses different swords in various forms of **divination**. A set of small, six-inch swords are used as a set. During **prayer** they are thrown to the ground. When they all fall pointing in the same direction it is a sign of good fortune. A large sword or a moon-shaped sword are also used in divination. The *mudang* clarifies the divination question. She then holds the **sacred** sword upright in her hand so that it touches the table or bowl and then releases it. When it stands, it is regarded as a good omen. When it falls, it is a sign of misfortune. See also **journey**.

Heinze, R. I. *Shamans of the 20th Century*. New York: Irvington Publishers, Inc., 1991.

Lee, Jung Y. "Korean Shamanistic Rituals." In *Religion and Society* 12. The Hague: Mouton Publishers, 1981.

Sword Ladder

The sword ladder, or to *t'ui*, is central to the final **initiation** of the *wu*, or traditional Chinese **shaman**. The *wu* work primarily in **trance** states of **embodiment** by *shen*, or **spirits**. They practice **divination**, trance dancing, and psychokinesis. Ancient *wu* displayed their **powers** by disappearing, swallowing **swords**, slashing themselves with sharp objects, and spitting **fire**, all without harming themselves.

The final initiation of the **apprentice wu** is a public **ceremony** during which the initiate enters a deep trance through ecstatic **dance**. While in trance she must physically ascend a **ladder** of twelve sword blades in her bare feet while her **soul** ascends into the **Upperworld**. Sometimes she must descend by another ladder. She must not only succeed in communicating with the spirits, which is the purpose of the **journey**, but she must do so without injury.

The initiation ceremony of the sword-ladder is practiced in several Southeast Asian **cultures**. The ladders are usually seven or twelve rungs. In some cultures, India for example, the sword blades are wooden. See also **ecstasy**; **shaman's ladder**; **Southeast Asia**.

Eliade, Mircea. *Shamanism: Archaic Techniques of Ecstasy*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1964.

Sycamore Fig

The sycamore fig is the Egyptian **Tree of Life**. It connects the **Lowerworld**, the realm of the serpent, with the **Middleworld**, the realm of the cow, and the **Upperworld**, the realm of the vulture. Its fruits are believed to be the **blood** and body of Hathor, the mother of all gods and goddesses. Therefore, eating the fruits of the Tree of Life is considered a rite of **sacred** communion.

Redmond, L. *When the Drummers Were Women: A Spiritual History of Rhythm*. New York: Three Rivers Press, 1997.

Symbolic Language

A symbolic language is the interconnecting system of symbols and meanings a **shaman** uses to interpret his or her **altered state of consciousness**, or **trance**, experiences. The symbols and their meanings emerge from a number of complex sources. These sources include **culture**, personal history,

nature, brain neurochemical function, **transpersonal** images like collected thoughts, **dream** scapes and figures, **visions**, and autonomous images from alternate realities which produce themselves, and thus have a life of their own.

Some symbols are universal, or nearly so. This may be explained by an innate ability in the human brain to recognize and respond to certain images. However, the nature of the response and the meaning accorded these symbols are not universal. What an image symbolizes depends on a complex interconnectedness of the sources listed above. The resulting symbolic language is unique to each shaman and to all individuals to choose to develop awareness of their own inner **language**.

Shamans use their symbolic language to transform their experience of the invisible world, which has no fixed meanings or forms, into useful information and **power** that can be directed with intent. Carl Jung explained that symbols are psychological mechanisms that transform **energy**. Symbols are by their own nature real and unreal, rational and irrational. This **dual nature** is their power and the reason they are the only medium that allows actual communication and translation of energies between the physical and spiritual worlds.

The meaning of the images and energies the shaman experiences in trance are not absolute or fixed. The experience is always relative. It must be interpreted relative to the shaman's

question or reason for entering the trance. For example, the trance experience is interpreted relative to the shamans request to heal the ill, to know the source of a drought, or to find game.

The shaman must maintain focus on his or her reason for being in the trance to accurately interpret the meaning of the trance experience. The symbolic language is crucial; it is the bridge between the worlds. The symbols and meanings brought forth from the shaman's trance must be both transformative for the shaman, the patient, and empathic for the audience. A successful shaman trusts implicitly in his or her symbolic language and interpretation, while adapting his or her presentation to the expectations of the community and the role the shaman fulfills within it. See also **ecstasy**.

Achterberg, J. "Healing Images and Symbols in Nonordinary States of Consciousness." *ReVision* 16, no. 4 (1994): 148–157.

Arrien, Angeles. *The Four-fold Way: Walking the Paths of the Warrior, Teacher, Healer, and Visionary*. San Francisco: HarperCollins, 1993.

Heinze, R. I. *Shamans of the 20th Century*. New York: Irvington Publishers, Inc., 1991.

Maslow, Abraham H. *Religions, Values, and Peak-Experiences*. New York: Penguin, 1994.

Peters, L. G., and D. Price-Williams. "Towards an Experimental Analysis of Shamanism." *American Ethnologist* 7, no. 3 (1980): 397–413.

T

Taartaa

The *taartaa* is a **torngraq**, or **helping spirit**, used by **angakok** in East **Greenland** who live below the ground. When the *angakok* enters his **trance** and his soul **journeys** out into the spirit world, the *taartaa* gradually enters the empty body of the *angakok*. The *taartaa* are believed to enter via the anus and exit in the same way when the *angakok*'s **soul** returns.

Lyon, William S. *Encyclopedia of Native American Shamanism: Sacred Ceremonies of North America*. Santa Barbara, CA: ABC-CLIO, 1998.

Taboo

Taboos are the precautions humans take when dealing with strong supernatural powers. Shamanic taboos carry no negative or positive implication in and of themselves. They are instructions that, when followed, allow humans to enter more fully into relationship with the **sacred** and remain in right relationship with these mysterious energies. The existence of a taboo implies the need for caution, respect, and for honoring the **spirit** powers being called upon.

In the broadest sense, "taboo," a Polynesian word, refers to a prohibition against certain actions. There are actions, like entering an **altered state of consciousness**, that allow an individual to come into contact with the sacred. These actions are regulated so that the sacred energies of the spirit world are not polluted or violated by the disrespect, disregard, or ignorance of humans.

When a taboo is violated, disharmony, blockage, or dissonance is created,

which pollutes the relationship between humans and the spirit world. Famine, **illness**, sterility, accidents, or a breakdown in social structure may result. The pollution must be cleansed, usually through **ritual**, **healing**, banishment, or death, depending on the severity of the violation.

The exact nature of a taboo varies from **culture** to culture and is always relative to the specific healing or ritual being conducted. Typical taboos for patients are restriction for several days to months from eating pork and lard, engaging in sexual activity, or sudden, jarring physical contact with others. Typical taboos for **shamans** include restrictions on types or amounts of food and abstinence from sexual activity, particularly during **training** or before and during healing rituals.

Taboos are often defined by the spirit world and communicated to the people through the shaman. Taboos arise from an awareness of the interrelated nature of our relationship with the sacred. See also **death and dying** and **energy**.

Taique

Taique is a hallucinogenic tea used by **Mapuche shamans** of Chile. *Taique* is made from the leaves of *Desfontania spinosa*, a shrub with holly-like leaves and red flowers with yellow tips. *D. spinosa* grows in the highlands of Central and **South America**.

Talasi

Corn pollen used as a sacred **offering** by the Hopi. *Homngumni*, or cornmeal, is also used. See also **sacred**.

Lyon, William S. *Encyclopedia of Native American Shamanism: Sacred Ceremonies of North America*. Santa Barbara, CA: ABC-CLIO, 1998.

Talisman

A talisman is a **power object** created for protection of the **soul**. The talisman

itself is a home for the **spirit** who is called on for protection. That spirit plays a part in deflecting and dissipating negative energies and maintaining a protective field of spirit **energy** around the wearer.

In **Africa**, a talisman is created by using magic and **art** to engage spirit in the task of protection for the owner, either **shaman** or patient. **Ritual** may be necessary to bring the spirit into the physical talisman after it has been created. The talisman is then “alive” with spirit and in some **cultures** it must be “fed” and cared for to keep its energies vital. The presence of the living talisman provides protection in the home or on the wearer.

A talisman can be in the form of a necklace, ring, belt, hat, or shoes. The most common talisman is a small pouch, filled with power objects and **invocations** whose energies together are the talisman. Depending on the actions of its bearer, the **power** of the talisman may be used to help or to hurt. Talismans are treated with great respect and care. Talismans belonging to shamans are often feared for their power.

In **North America** a talisman is a **charm** created to bring good fortune to its owner. The energies of some talismans may be absorbed into the energy of the owner, effectively generating good fortune even when the object is not with the owner. Other talismans must be present to be effective. Some talismans generate good fortune by deflecting harmful or malevolent energies. See also **fetish** and **medicine**.

Lyon, William S. *Encyclopedia of Native American Shamanism: Sacred Ceremonies of North America*. Santa Barbara, CA: ABC-CLIO, 1998.

Somé, M. P. *Of Water and the Spirit: Ritual, Magic and Initiation in the Life of an African Shaman*. New York: Penguin Group USA, Inc., 1995.

Tamang

A Tibeto-Burmese-speaking people who live in the mountains to the east and west of Kathmandu Valley in **Nepal**. They comprise the largest ethnic group in Nepal and are of Tibetan origin. The Tamang practice a form of **shamanism** paralleling that found farther north in **Siberia** and Central and North Asia. They are Buddhists, though few lay people meditate, know the Buddhist doctrine, or read the sacred texts. Animism is the underlying **religion** and the Tamang understand **spirits** to be accountable for the goings on and misfortune of their lives.

The Tamang have developed a unique blend of Buddhism and Hinduism combined with their own much more ancient pre-Buddhist **Bön-po** shamanic tradition. The Tamang, never having allowed their belief system to be overcome by Buddhism or Hinduism, are noted for their powerful **shamans** who are a strong spiritual force in contemporary society. The basis of the shaman's willingness to help the patient is compassion and the related belief that by taking on the suffering of others the shaman heals him/herself. The shamans are consulted by everyone, rich and poor, educated and illiterate.

Tamang shamanism developed from **Bön** alongside **Lamaism** (Tibetan Buddhism) as compatible and autonomous spiritual paths. Many of the important elements of the Bön system have remained intact, while others are thinly veiled or censored to subscribe to the Buddhist worldview. There is some overlap of functions of shamans and lamas. In an adaptation to cultural changes over time, the basic function of the shaman is to heal and of the lama to conduct the funeral **ceremony** and act as **psychopomp**.

The Tamang *bompo* (shaman, from the ancient Bön-po) enters **trance** states to influence the spirits, combat malevolent spirits, exorcise spirits, and otherwise help those being affected by spirits. The *bompo* uses **soul flight** to

communicate with the Supreme Being of the Sky and **embodiment** trance states for **divination** and **extraction**. The *bompo* utilize their *sakti*, **power**, primarily for **healing**, secondarily in **sorcery**, and infrequently in securing food.

There are a number of different types of *bompo*. The *dunsor boms* perform clan rituals, which are performed during the day, and previously performed funeral ceremonies, a function taken over by lamas. The *munsor boms* perform healing rituals which are always performed at night. Some *bompo* perform both day and night rituals.

Another distinction is made between shamans who are called, trained, and taught **mantras** directly by spirit and those who are called by spirit, but trained and taught mantras by a human *bompo*. The *aph se aph* shamans who have no human intervention in their **training** are believed to be the most powerful. These *aph se aph* shamans are called spontaneously and initiated by the *yi dam* spirit of former shamans or by *Banjhakri*, the **Forest Shaman**. The latter are called *rang shin tugba* and they are typically considered the most powerful of the *aph se aph*.

Cosmology

A small portion of the vast Tamang cosmology explains that in the first age humans lived free of sickness, aging, or “bad qualities.” In the second age **sacrifices** and rituals developed. In the third age passions and **illness** arose from conflicting and contradictory ideas. In the fourth age the “poisons” arose: greed and cruel rulers, slavery, suffering, death, danger, war, **pain**, and material obsession.

The **First Shaman**, *Nara Bön Chen*, appeared inspired by humanity's need. *Nara Bön Chen* battled the disharmonious spirits and sorcerers who were the cause of the poverty and sickness. In his final battle he fought with nine witch sisters and came to a truce agreement. In that agreement the witches could

continue to cause illness for humanity, but could no longer extract payment and **blood** sacrifices. In exchange, the shamans would be able to heal humanity of these illnesses.

Soul

Bhla, meaning **soul**, is used interchangeably with *sakti*, meaning life-force **energy**. The Tamang conceive of the *bhla* as a multiple soul. The *chi wa* is associated with wisdom, light, and consciousness; it transmigrates to the **Upperworld** after death and is reincarnated. It is the soul that is lost and retrieved in **soul retrieval**. The *yi dam* is associated with love, the heart, and kinship; it transmigrates with the *chi wa* and is reincarnated. It is the soul that shamans pass on at death to their favorite **apprentice** for whom it becomes the “chief guru” or **teacher** in their shamanic work. The *sem chang* is associated with anger and prone to attachment to the physical world, especially in cases of violent, accidental, or unnatural death and improper burial. However, when a person's life is properly resolved at death, the *sem chang* will transmigrate along with the *chi wa* and *yi dam*.

The *yi dam* of a shaman belongs to the people because it is full of mantras and techniques for healing the people. Usually a shaman passes his or her *yi dam* on at death through the family lineage to a descendant who shows a natural inclination for shamanic abilities. At a shaman's funeral ritual, an effigy is dressed in the shaman's gear and his or her **power objects** are laid out. The shaman's *yi dam* is then called on and asked to empower the effigy.

As the *yi dam* arrives, a rainbow light descends from the Upperworld. The effigy and power objects begin to shake with the power of the shaman's soul. The *yi dam* can be addressed through the effigy with questions to clarify, for example, who is to receive the *yi dam* (if that is in question) and the mantra needed to invoke the *yi dam* in the body of the chosen individual. Once embodied, the

yi dam serves as a guru or teacher for the novice, providing healing mantras and access to the other tools and techniques used by the deceased shaman.

The Calling

The initial calling is considered a “crazy possession”; it is an involuntary state specific to those chosen to become shamans. The possessing spirit may be either the soul of a deceased shaman or that of *Banjhakri*, the Forest Shaman. The *yi dam* of powerful *bompo* that are not passed on at death search for a candidate with a pure heart to whom they can transmit their soul force, mantras, and healing **knowledge**. *Banjhakri* also searches for candidates of pure heart to initiate.

These spirits enter the body of the candidate spontaneously. This trance state is uncontrolled, a “crazy possession.” Often violent, this **possession** state may last or reoccur for several days. If resisted or misdiagnosed and treated as mental illness, it may last for months or years.

The characteristics of this uncontrolled possession are anxiety, hallucinations, convulsions, and desire for solitude, which are all considered abnormal in Tamang society. This altered state is an involuntary spirit possession and loss of soul. The candidate who overcomes this crisis and masters the symptoms will become a *bompo*.

Surviving the initial calling demands an expansion of consciousness of the candidate. Whether it is the acceptance of the shaman's *yi dam* or the successful completion of *Banjhakri*'s initiatory adventures in **non-ordinary reality**, something new must rise from within the candidate in response to this challenge.

Not all who experience this initial uncontrolled possession can master the intense emotions and bizarre experiences that are characteristic of this calling from spirit. Some are ejected by *Banjhakri* because their hearts do not prove to be pure. Others do not possess

the necessary balance of inner strength and openheartedness that would allow the awe, mystery, and sacredness of the experience to open new ways of understanding and perceiving reality.

Training

Apprenticeship can last for many years. There are numerous mantras and **myths** to memorize, and learning to master trance, ritual methods, and healing techniques is an arduous process. Training continues as long as it takes the candidate to progress through the three remaining stages of **initiation**. There are four stages of initiation overall, the crazy possession being the first. After this experience every Tamang shaman must find a teacher to complete the training and initiation.

Apprenticeship with a human guru is often necessary to master the ability to work with one's inner guru. Training is both didactic, learning ritual forms, methods, and myths, and ecstatic, learning to master different trance states and their uses. Mastery is nothing less than the ability to control the initiation of and exit the trance state and oneself throughout the duration of the trance.

The second stage of initiation, *lha khreba* or possession, involves the preparation and performance of *guru puja*, in which the possessing spirit guru speaks out and identifies itself through the apprentice. When successfully performed the spirit guru begins to visit the apprentice in **dreams** and teach. The apprentice advances in his or her control of trance, but has not yet developed full mastery.

The third stage of initiation, *lha khresi*, marks a level of mastery over the possession trance. The apprentice can now use the trance state to perform divination, **diagnosis**, and healing *puja* (rituals). The apprentice is now a *bompo*, and many never progress beyond this stage of initiation.

The fourth stage of initiation is achieved in two stages of initiatory ritual: the *pho wang lung* and the *gufa*. In

completing the *pho* initiation ritual, the *bompo* has raised his or her consciousness to the degree that the fontanelle on the top of the head opens and the *chi wa* soul flies free of the body into soul flight which gives the *bompo* access to clear visions.

The *gufa* initiation lasts for seven days, during which the *bompo* **drums** continually in a hallowed shelter made of rice straw erected in a cemetery. The *bompo* must succeed in fighting off the malevolent spirits and calling on the gods using mantras and drumming day and night. If successful the *bompo* is rewarded with a **journey** first to *Yama lok*, the **Land of the Dead**, where he or she surrenders to death and then on the final day to the highest heaven where he or she meets **Ghesar Gyalpo**, the Supreme Mother/Father deity of the *bompo*, and is reborn.

Apprenticeship is systematic, with precise psychological goals and methods for attaining them. In the formal application of this guru-disciple relationship the apprentice is transformed psychologically. The training is not merely therapeutic for the apprentice. It enables the future shaman to perform the most important function of his or her vocation, the community psychotherapist.

In his or her psychotherapeutic role, the *bompo* is called on to heal social conflict. Tamang shamans are keen observers of social interactions, frequenting the tea shops and taverns where local gossip abounds so that they can learn about the community's social problems. The information obtained is used later in the rituals that heal and release social tension.

The curing rituals for social conflict bring about a catharsis and rally group support around the patient. Selections from Tamang mythology are often retold in these rituals. The myth and its cultural heroes provide a template for the patient to see themselves in the heroic acts and qualities and to realign with the dominant cultural symbols of health and well-being. The myth arouses in the

community faith and hope in the patient. Through the healing ritual and cultural mythology, the *bompo* reorders the **chaos** inspired by the illness and provides a path for the patient and community to heal.

Trance

Control, communicative rapport, and memory are the three significant and characteristic elements of the Tamang shaman's trance. The *bompo* often invokes his or her trance with drumming and a frenzied **dance** that induces a passive, hypo-aroused state from which they narrate **visions**. The shaman's trance is outwardly oriented toward the community with the goal of serving as a medium of communication and action between the spirit world and that of humankind.

The purpose of the shaman's trance is to "beg for power." As the spirits arrive to grant the request for power, the shaman's physical body may shake and become possessed by the spirit. It is essential for the shaman to know the spirits of the environment and all the spirits of power so that he or she knows what spirit she now embodies. In addition, the shaman must be able to identify who or what is possessing or otherwise interfering with the patient.

Divination

The process of divination is unique to each *bompo*; however the responsibility is the same. Divination must determine the cause of the illness: spirit-caused, which are subdivided into attacks, sorcery, **soul loss**, or spirit possession, **energy intrusion**, sorcery, or natural causes. The *bompo* must also determine what type of spirits are involved in creating the illness, the appropriate remedy or healing ritual, and what type of spirits to involve in the healing.

When an extraction healing is called for, the *bompo* must determine the nature of the intrusion itself, where it came from, how it was able to enter the patient, and by whom it was sent, which includes the possibility of self-infliction.

The above information may be divined from the energy intrusion itself after it has been removed from the body.

Healing

Tamang healing occurs in a complex philosophical context. The various agents of affliction involve a complex hierarchy of spirits whose actions affect the living. Furthermore, those effects are not accidental; there is a reason for and an underlying meaning in every event and illness. When intervening in this spiritual context on the patient's behalf, the shaman is protected by his or her purity of heart and the compassion expressed through the act of healing.

The *bompo* perform extraction healing rituals in a embodiment trance state. They are merged with their **helping spirits**, often bears, wolves, tigers, leopards, jackals, or fierce divinities. Embodying the helping spirit is a means of gaining that power and it demands a mastery of this trance state. Generally, *bompo* perform sucking extractions. Extraction tools, like a goat's horn, metal straw, or tube are often used as aids in sucking out the poisons.

There are many possible sources of harmful energy intrusions. Intrusions can be sent by deities who have been dishonored, **spirits of the dead** who died unnatural deaths or who did not receive proper funeral rites, spirits of a location like a cemeteries or crossroads, spirits of Nature or the **elements**, malevolent **animal spirits**, malevolent spirits, semi-malevolent spirits, spirits of **diseases**, and various **disease objects** that do not possess a will or consciousness. Furthermore, any of these spirits can be used by sorcerers to inflict harm.

Particular to Tamang perspective, intrusions are the result of "poisons." These poisons are envy, lust, pride, hatred, and lying and any of the spirits listed above can send these poisons. Through divination the shaman reveals the true nature of the poison and the reason the patient was attacked with that particular poison. The presence of an animal spirit may imply the nature of

the intrusion, for example, a pig spirit is associated with the poisons ignorance, lying, and denial; the serpent is associated with anger, hatred, malevolence, and guilt; and the cock is associated with greed, lust, and insatiable wanting.

After the extraction is complete and the healing ritual is closed, the extracted intrusions are fed to "hungry spirits." Hungry spirits are lesser spirits who gain the energy/ability/consciousness to move up in the hierarchy of spirits by consuming the harmful energies, which is considered an act of compassion. Feeding the spirits is also an act of compassion because it gives them the opportunity to aid in restoring balance in the world.

A bucket full of intrusions, sticks, stones, blood, hair, wood slivers, other small projectiles, and various undefined substances, is collected during a full night of extractions by a powerful Tamang *bompo*. A ritual is performed on the intrusions, magic (directed intentions and/or herbs) is added to the bucket, and then it is left in an area where hungry spirits collect, like crossroads or cemeteries. This procedure is followed for all intrusions, whether or not they manifest in physical form.

Soul loss is caused by fright or another experience that forces the soul to leave the body, allowing it to be stolen by a *lagu* (spirit). Soul retrieval, or *gun-nasera utthar puja*, the going to bring back the heart/mind soul ritual, is more often than not combined with other healing processes by the *bompo*. These other healing processes include extraction, divination, spirit **invocation**, and psychopompic work. The healing ritual as a whole is known as *karga puja*, the spirit weapons ceremony.

Psychopomp

Both shamans and Buddhist lamas perform psychopomp rituals to convey the souls of the dead. They escort these souls in two different ways. The *bompo* is called to convey the soul of the recently deceased if a lama is not available, if the lama is not powerful enough,

or if the deceased is another *bompo*. The *bompo* performs all the psychopomp work in areas remote to the monasteries.

Traditionally, the dead are buried three days after death and the funeral ceremony is performed within forty-nine days. The *bompo* then guides the passage of the soul on to the Kosmic Mother/Father deity, **Ghesar Gyalpo**, using spontaneous visions or a trance state. When the soul being conveyed feels that its life is resolved and is ready to move on, a nine-rung **ladder** falls from the Upperworld. The *bompo* and the soul ascend the ladder to Ghesar Gyalpo who sits, awaiting the soul's return, on a throne covered with soul flowers.

When souls of the dead remain stuck in the human realm where they don't belong, the *bompo* performs a ritual. The purpose of the ritual is to enable the soul to resolve its attachments to the last life so that it can move on to where it now belongs. In the ritual the *bompo* allows the soul of the deceased to speak through his or her body and communicate to the living why it is angry or unresolved about its passing. The *bompo* then asks how the soul can be helped in its resolution and transition to Ghesar Gyalpo.

Altar

At the center of the *bompo's* ritual is his or her **altar**. In the center of the altar is the candle, which is lit for the **Sun** and *Banjhakri*. A water vessel is placed on the altar in connection with the First Shaman, the son of the Kosmic Mother/Father deity, who fashioned a vessel to carry sacred **water** and to attract lost souls back to the physical world.

Paraphernalia

Tamang shamans work with a specific set of power objects that includes: drum, a trumpet made of a human thigh bone used to call on the spirits, a peacock **feather** headdress worn to create a temporary bridge between heaven

and **earth** allowing communication with the spirit world, rosaries, bells, and a magical dagger or *phurba*.

The peacock's feathers come from a time after sorcery broke the Rainbow Bridge that connected heaven and earth. When the bridge broke the humans became mortal and began to suffer. The daughter of the Kosmic Mother/Father deity looked down at the suffering and felt compassion for humanity and its need for healing. She sent the peacock with its iridescent feathers that, when worn by the *bompo*, allowed the healer to create a temporary bridge to the spirit world and to get the healing humanity needed.

Mantras and Offerings

Mantras, **offerings**, and trance are the three prominent elements in Tamang shamanic rituals. Mantras allow the shaman to use his or her voice to focus the power they have been given by the helping spirits. Mantras are used to compel, restrain, and transform energies. To this end they are often worded as imperatives that define how things will be. Mantras are spoken or blown like a dart. Mantras are a tool to gather and direct power and, as with all tools, *bompo* are often secretive about their mantras, speaking their mantras in a whisper to protect them.

Typical offerings in Tamang rituals are rice, which is the staff of life in Nepal, lights, **incense**, flowers, and herbs. Rice is often thrown, overhand to cast energies or spirits away and underhand as an offering. See also **altered states of consciousness; death and dying; ecstasy; exorcism; lhamo/lhapa; mediumship; multiple soul belief; psychotherapeutic practices**.

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Taoism

See **Daoism (Taoism)**.

Tapel

A traditional Balinese **mask** created as a home for spirit **energy**. The *tapel* is a **power object** that is *tenget*, or possessed by spirit energy. The *tapels* used in dramas and processions depict humans, mythological animals, and spirit beings, usually witches and low spirits. The masks are granted powers as beings in Bali society.

In Bali the spirit world and the natural world are One. The gods and goddesses are present in all things. Every element of nature possesses its own **power**, which reflects the power of the gods. Everything is potentially a home for spirits whose energy can be directed toward benevolent or malevolent ends.

Tapels are made in a **sacred** way of wood from a *tenget* tree to be used in specific **rituals**. When the *tapel* is danced in ritual, the dancer enters a **trance** state induced by the spirit in the *tapel*. The spirit embodied in the mask enters the dancer and lives again in the ritual drama and battles of positive and negative forces of Balinese mythology.

The most sacred masks are carved only by a consecrated *undagi tapel*, mask carver, in a prescribed manner. The sacred aspect of the mask comes from its treatment by the *undagi tapel*, the wood that is used, the magic letters inscribed inside it, and the spirit power embodied in it.

The tree itself is *tenget* and the choice of tree is important. Only a small amount of wood is taken by the *undagi tapel*, accompanied by **prayers** and **offerings** that ask the permission of the spirit of the tree and the spirit of the place where the tree grows. The wood is cut only on propitious days and the carving itself may take over four months.

The carving begins with two offerings to ask for **blessings** for success, one to Bhatara Surya, the Sun God, and one to Taksu, the spirit of inspiration. The final **purification** process involves three steps: purifying the mask (and **costume**) from indignities suffered during the building process, uniting the mask and the costume, and enlivening the mask.

For sacred *tapel*, the initial *pasupati* ritual follows the purification to awaken the spirit in the *tapel*. During the *pasupati* ritual the mask claims its spirit power and receives it in full view of the villagers. The spirits are drawn to the mask with such power that even masks that are not made in a consecrated way are known to spontaneously become *tenget*.

Tapel may lose some of their spirit energy over time. **Initiations** of renewed or new masks can involve as many as ten days of feasting, **dance**, shadow puppets, cock fights, and processions. First, the spirit is released from the old *tapel* and sent home during a ritual in which the “head” or spirit inhabiting the mask separates from the “body” or wood mask. When the new *tapel* is ready it is sent to the temple where a *pasupati ceremony* is held to invite the spirit back into its new *tapel*.

Sacred *tapel* are never displayed. They are kept in fabric bags of particular **colors** chosen for their effect on the spirit in the *tapel*. The masks in their bags are placed in baskets and stored in the temple complex. See also **embodiment** and **magical alphabet**.

Slattum, J. *Masks of Bali*. San Francisco: Chronicle Books, 1992.

Teachers

The **helping spirits** are the **shaman's** true teachers. Most teach while the shaman is in an altered state, either **dreaming** or journeying. More experienced shamans may also receive teaching from helping spirits in **ordinary reality**. All helping spirits teach the shaman how to use their **power**, gifts, and specific skills, e.g., the **knowledge** of the plants in how to use them as **medicines**, the skill of the rhinoceros to heal sexuality, the tiger to extract malevolent **energy**, the snake to shed the past in one piece, etc.

The helping spirits bring the novice into the shamanic work, teach skills through experiences in **non-ordinary reality**, and create the **initiation** experiences necessary for the initiate to emerge from the ordeal a shaman.

"Teacher" often refers to helping spirits in human form, e.g., gods, goddesses, angels, **ancestors**, etc. However, since all helping spirits teach and all are capable of **shapeshifting** between human and animal forms, this distinction is unnecessary. See also **altered states of consciousness**; **dreamtime**; **journey**.

Harner, Michael J. *The Way of the Shaman*. San Francisco: Harper-Collins, 1990.

Techniques of Ecstasy

Shamans use a variety, and often a combination, of techniques to induce ecstatic states. These include: seclusion, **silence**, solitude, sleep deprivation, visual and/or sensory deprivation, dehydration, fasting, **pain** stimulation, repetitious actions, like grinding or weaving, jumping, running, sexual activity, visualization, drumming, dancing, instruments like bowstrings and bells, chanting, and ingesting **psychoactive plants**.

Many of these techniques set up a monotonous **rhythm** with an instrument or through the body. These regular, monotonous rhythms function as

"**vehicles**" for the shaman who rides this thread of rhythm into and out of the altered state of consciousness. For example, percussion instruments like the **drum** may facilitate **trance** states when beaten at certain rapid rates. Psychotropic plants also serve as vehicles for the shaman to enter trance.

The shamans of some **cultures** use focused concentration or meditation-like means to enter trance. These shamans, like the Australian **aboriginal** shamans for example, sit or lie in quiet contemplative states when communicating with the supernatural and performing magical acts.

Shamans are masters of techniques that allow them to access and exploit their own normal, human potential. The capacity to experience **altered states of consciousness** is a psychobiological capacity of the species, and thus universal. Its use, institutionalization, and patterning are features of culture, and thus variable. Control of the ecstatic state is universal to **shamanism**; the means to invoke the state varies.

Humans have a biological propensity for experiencing a range of altered states, including **ecstasy**. Humans cannot tolerate ecstasy deprivation forever. Nothing can change the biological capacity and deep desire for experiences of meaning and contact with the Divine. Humans deprived of ecstasy spontaneously create new **religions** from the content of their own ecstatic experiences and bits and pieces passed on via oral traditions, **dreams**, and folklore. See also **Australia**; **chant**; **dance**.

Eliade, Mircea. *Shamanism: Archaic Techniques of Ecstasy*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1964.

Peters, L. G., and D. Price-Williams. "Towards an Experimental Analysis of Shamanism." *American Ethnologist* 7, no. 3 (1980): 397-413.

Tembetá

The *tembetá* is an ornament of yellow resin inserted into the lower lip of

young **Avá-Chiripá** males as part of their traditional **initiation** into adulthood. The *tembetá* serves as a connection to Tupá, a **sky** god and the **spirit** of the **west** wind and the whirlwind. It is believed to both symbolize and produce lightning, Tupá's signature **power**.

The Avá-Chiripá are one of three large subgroups comprising the Guaraní people of **South America**.

Bartolomé, M. A. "Shamanism Among the Avá-Chiripá." In *World Anthropology: Spirits, Shamans, and Stars*. The Hague: Mouton Publishers, 1979.

Teonanácatl

Teonanácatl, which means "divine or wondrous or awesome flesh," is the Nahuatl name for several species of hallucinogenic **mushrooms**. They have been employed as **sacred** hallucinogens since ancient times in Mexico and Guatemala. *Teonanácatl* was revered for its role as a plant **entheogen** by the **Aztecs** and other Nahuatl tribes. Though they are a non-flowering fungi, these mushrooms are known as "little flowers of the gods," a term of endearment and respect for the divine **ecstasy** that is characteristic of the **trance** state they induce.

Teonanácatl is found throughout the Americas and Europe. There is evidence that shamanic practices with the sacred mushroom flourished in northwestern Mexico in prehistoric times (100 B.C.E. to 400 C.E.). Traditions among contemporary **Huichol** also suggest the use of *Teonanácatl* in ancient times. These mushrooms continue to be of great importance in **shamanic healing** rituals primarily in Mexico and Guatemala today. It has not been determined whether the modern mushroom use in the **Maya** regions of Mexico and Guatemala is a vestige of former Mayan use or a recent introduction from the native peoples of Oaxaca.

These mushrooms are naturally occurring throughout the vast northwestern region of **South America**.

Though there is evidence of their former use in South America, there is no apparent use today. Archaeological evidence of the ancient use of this plant entheogen is found in the Yucatan, Costa Rica, Panama, the Sinú and Calima regions of Colombia, and as far south as the Peruvian Amazon. However, evidence is not proof, and there remains an absence of modern use of mushrooms and a lack of reference to such use in the colonial literature to support the archaeological information.

At least twenty-four species of fungi are employed in southern Mexico today. The most important belong to the genus *Psilocybe* and contain the psychoactive component **psilocybine**. **Shamans** use a wide range of different mushrooms depending on the season, **weather** variations, and specific purpose of the **healing**. The choice of mushroom is also determined by the shaman's relationship with the **spirit** of the different mushrooms and the shaman's personal preference.

Psilocybe mexicana, one of the most widely used of the "little flowers of the gods," is found nearly worldwide growing in limestone regions at altitudes of 4,500 to 5,500 feet. **Psilocybe mushrooms** are found in wet meadows and fields, in **oak** or pine forests, and at times in mossy areas along trails. *Psilocybe* is one of the smallest of the sacred hallucinogenic mushrooms, growing from one to four inches high with a conical or hemispherical cap from a quarter to just over one inch in diameter. The cap is usually a weak straw color, though it ranges from greenish to brick red along the red/green color spectrum. The hollow stipe is yellow to yellow-pink in color and brick red at the base. The spores are darker, from sepia to purple brown.

Stropharia cubensis, another important hallucinogen in Mexico, is found nearly worldwide. Not all shamans will use *Stropharia*. It is known as *Hongo de San Isidro* by the people of Oaxaca, and as *Di-shi-tjo-le-rra-ja*, "divine mushroom of manure," by the **Mazatecs**.

Stropharia grows from one and three quarters to five and three quarters inches in height and the conical cap is usually from three quarters to two inches in diameter. The cap begins as an onion-shaped dome whose outer circumference curls up with age, inverting the outer edges of the cap. The cap is chocolate brown to brown-orange in color which blends to tan or white at the outer edges. The hollow stipe is white to yellow to ashy red and strongly lined. The gills range from white to deep purple grays and browns. The spores are purple-brown.

Conocybe siligineoides is another of the sacred hallucinogenic mushrooms of Mexico found growing worldwide. Psilocybine has not been isolated in this species and the active principle is not yet clear. *Conocybe siligineoides* grows to three inches in height with a cap one inch in diameter and is found commonly in rotting wood. The cap is deep orange in the center and fawn-orange-red toward the edges. The gills are saffron to brown-orange and the spores are chrome yellow.

Panaeolus sphinctrinus, found worldwide, is used in northeastern Oaxaca for shamanic **rituals** and **divination**. *Panaeolus sphinctrinus* is used by some Mazatec and Chinantec shamans who call it *T-ha-na-sa*, *She-to*, "pasture mushroom," and *To-shka*, "intoxicating mushroom." *Panaeolus sphinctrinus* is a delicate mushroom that grows up to four inches in height, usually in cow dung. The obtusely pointed, ovoid cap is yellow-brown to tan-gray and approximately one and a quarter inches in diameter. The stipe is dark gray, the gills brown-black, and the spores black.

The Spanish invaders who conquered Mexico found the sacred use of mushrooms offensive and set out, rather successfully, to eradicate the practice. The Spanish ecclesiastics, particularly intolerant of any cult other than their own, condemned *Teonanácatl* and its use outright. Illustrations from a seventeenth-century missionary guide depicted such scenes as the devil

dancing on a mushroom or the devil enticing a native Mexican to eat a mushroom.

The campaign of persecution carried out by the church fathers drove the use of *Teonanácatl* into hiding in the mountain villages of central and southern Mexico so completely that neither anthropologists nor botanists could find a sign of it for four centuries. In the late 1930s, *Teonanácatl* was identified as several species of hallucinogenic mushrooms and was then associated with contemporary mushroom healing ceremonies.

Use

Quetzalcoatl instructed their nine Ancient Ones of the Aztecs in the origin and use of *Teonanácatl*. From that time forward these sacred mushrooms have been consumed in pairs in rituals. The *Teonanácatl* mushrooms are used for divination, shamanic rituals, and religious practices by the Mazatec, Chinantec, Chatino, Mije, Zapotec, Mixtec of Oaxaca, the Tarascan of Michoacan, the Nahua, and possibly the Otomi of Puebla. The Mazatec practice the most intensive use of *Teonanácatl*, which they call *Nti-si-tho*.

Mazatec shaman Maria Sabina humbly describes how the sacred mushrooms enable her to do her shamanic healing work. "It is they, the sacred mushrooms, that speak in a way I can understand. I ask them and they answer me. When I return from the trip that I have taken with them, I tell what they have told me and what they have shown me."

Gathering and Preparation

In pre-conquest times the mushrooms were gathered by men of status (whether shamans or **priests** is unclear) who went into the hills to pray and **chant** all night long. At dawn if the mushrooms spoke to the men through a gentle breeze, they were gathered and brought back to the village. In contemporary times the mushrooms are gathered by the shamans who use them.

For the Mazatec, the mushrooms that sprout erratically are spontaneous gifts from the Divine Spirit. The mushrooms embody that Spirit and proclaim that Spirit through the qualities of the trance state that they induce. For the Mazatec then, it is literally the grace of the Divine Spirit that allows individuals who eat the mushroom to experience the Divine Spirit while in the ecstasy of trance.

Active Principle

The psychoactive constituents, psilocybine and psilocine, are indole alkaloids. They are unique to the *Teonanácatl* mushrooms and are not found in other plants. These compounds are closely related to the neurotransmitter serotonin, a chemical substance found in the brain that regulates the biochemistry of psychic functions.

Ritual of Receiving the Plant Spirit, or Plant Medicine

In a healing ritual, the shaman ingests the mushroom, in many **cultures** always in pairs. He or she begins at the **altar** on which is placed the shaman's **power objects**, copal **incense**, candles, and the fresh mushrooms. After **cleansing** the mushrooms in copal smoke, the shaman eats several mushrooms and begins to chant, invoking the **helping spirits** and the spirit of the mushroom. The shaman presents the questions pertaining to the patient's **illness** and then prays in a long chant calling forth the spirits of the plants, **earth**, mountains, rocks, rivers, thunder, **sun**, **moon**, and the stars who will answer his or her questions.

The shaman then makes his or her act of divination. The tools of divination, if any are used, are particular to each shaman. The true nature of the illness and the necessary remedy are diagnosed, healing work is done and/or **medicines** are prepared, and the ritual is closed. In some rituals the participants are also invited to consume the sacred mushrooms.

In the modern mushroom *velada* (night vigil), the Mazatec shaman

praises the spirit of the mushroom as she cleanses the fungi in copal smoke. They are distributed in pairs to the participants if they are also to eat the mushrooms, and ingested while facing the altar. All lights and candles are extinguished and **silence** is called for.

The shaman begins to hum in a way that evolves into a chant as she begins to enter trance. The chanting will continue throughout the night, accompanied by clapping or thumping the chest over the heart. In this trance state the shaman chants for hours, speaking to the spirit of the mushroom and allowing the spirit to speak through them.

While Mazatec shamans chant they maintain a **rhythm**, through clapping or other percussion, during the entire nightlong ritual. Pre-Christian artifacts from Mexico show a shaman beating a mushroom-shaped **drum**, presenting the possibility that ancient shamans also used drums to accompany their rituals.

Throughout the night in the mushroom-induced alternate state, the shaman feels him/herself in full contact with the invisible world of spirit. From this experience the shaman develops complete and sincere faith that the mushroom will reveal the spiritual truth to all of the shaman's questions.

With great reverence and love expressed toward the sacred mushrooms, the shaman closes the nightlong ritual with a final request for **blessings** from the spirit world for those who are gathered. All participants must now live with the truth gained from this audience with Spirit made possible only through the sacred powers of *Teonanácatl*.

Characteristics of the Induced Altered State

The mushroom-induced trance is characterized by **visions** of geometric patterns, rich **colors**, and movement, the feeling of the **soul** leaving the confines of the body and floating or flying, occasionally auditory hallucinations, and a sensation of the Divine presence.

Mazatec shaman Maria Sabina eloquently and reverentially describes the world she enters while in a mushroom-induced trance: "There is a world beyond ours, a world that is far away, nearby, and invisible. And there is where God lives, where the dead live, the spirits and the saints, a world where everything has already happened and everything is known. That world talks. It has a **language** of its own. I report what it says. The sacred mushroom takes me by the hand and brings me to the world where everything is known." See also **altered states of consciousness; alternate states of consciousness; embodiment; persecution of shamans; plant hallucinogens; plant medicines.**

Davis, Wade. *One River: Explorations and Discoveries in the Amazon Rainforest*. New York: Simon & Schuster, 1996.

Riedlinger, T. J. "Pentacostal Elements in R. G. Wasson's Account of the Mazatec Mushroom Velada." *Shaman's Drum* 43 (Fall 1996): 26–35.

Schultes, Richard Evans, Albert Hofmann, and Christian Rätsch. *Plants of the Gods: Their Sacred, Healing, and Hallucinogenic Powers*. Rochester, VT: Healing Arts Press, 2001.

The Call

Shamans experience a calling to their profession. The nature of this call from **spirit** can be as dramatic as a seven-year **illness** or as simple as a **dream**. Either way, there is an overwhelming feeling that the profession chooses them or that they were compelled along the path by forces out of their control. Asking a shaman why they do what they do is like asking a painter why they paint or a dancer why they dance. They are called to do it. It is their art.

The call takes many different forms, both traditional and uniquely individual. The call is perceived to come from spirit, who is interpreted as an ancestor spirit, **nature spirit**, **animal spirit**, a form of a Great Spirit (Creator spirit), or

the universal spirit of the **Kosmos** (the Source, what was before the Creator). The call touches the individual deeper than beliefs, fantasy, or desire. It remains, echoing in the sphere of their being until a choice is made of how to respond to the call.

There are three general forms of the call found in traditional shamanic **cultures**:

1. The most common form is a personal experience of being called by spirit. This experience, though essentially psycho-spiritual, begins with a sickness, physical and/or mental, that cannot be cured by customary methods of treatment. The seven-year illnesses typical of Siberian shamans and the **vision quests** of North American shamans are examples of this form of the call.
2. The call comes through inheritance, in which case a living ancestor who is a shaman or the spirit of a dead ancestor who was a shaman chooses their successor from their descendants.
3. The individual identifies a deep yearning that they must follow beyond all reason and logic. When this deep desire is identified, the individual looks for a **teacher** who will train and initiate them. This practice is common in southern Asia, for example.

In some traditional shamanic cultures the call is a very specific and complex interaction between spirit and the novice. Some cultures believe that the call comes from the **soul** of a **dead shaman** who is looking to be reborn after being rejuvenated on the branches of the **World Tree**, at the breast of the **First Shaman**, or in the refining **fires** of the **blacksmith**. Another complex theme is the need for a mystical union between the physical and spiritual worlds, as in the Indonesian **ritual** mating of heaven (the spirit) and **earth** (the shaman) or the spirits of the **Soma** (India) who look for human wives to bear their children.

The call may come at any age and the **training** can begin at that time, however, traditionally, shamans are not allowed to practice until after puberty. The commitment to becoming a shaman is usually made in earnest between the ages of twenty-five and forty. Most often the **healing** practice begins after thirty when the individual has fulfilled their duties toward their community through marriage and profession. More important, shamans find compassion for their clients in their own life experience.

For many **contemporary shamans** the response to the call comes later in life, after a life crisis or during the soul searching of middle age. Contemporary people face a staggering array of career opportunities and “shaman” is rarely seen as one of them. Those who find their calling tend to do so through a process of trial and error. However, cultural resistance has more to do with the delaying in recognition of the call and acceptance of **shamanism** as a valid profession.

Many factors contribute to contemporary resistance to shamanism. Shamans are widely considered fakes, charlatans, and madmen in civilized societies due to centuries of misinformation about shamans. Contemporary people are taught to pursue practical, lucrative professions and not to follow their heart or some message from the spirit world. An often overlooked, yet significant, factor is that post-Freudian people have a differently (perhaps overly) developed ego than their **ancestors**. The effort necessary to get free of the mental and emotional control expected in contemporary life makes the **ego death** necessary for shamanic **initiation** simply too terrifying a prospect.

There is no official form of the call used to define all shamans because passing judgment relative to some external belief system, or dogma, is the antithesis of the creativity essential to shamanism. Spirit speaks to each culture and each individual uniquely, through their own **symbolic language**,

which only they can interpret accurately for themselves. However there are inappropriate reasons that individuals pursue shamanism as a profession: **power** and healing.

Contemporary people are attracted to the power and healing that come to the shaman along his or her path. The personal desire for these need not be mistaken for the call to become a shaman, but should be understood as the need for **shamanic healing**. Those who pursue shamanism for power are dangerous to themselves, risking insanity or death, and dangerous to others should they survive the training and become sorcerers. Those who pursue shamanism for healing will soon recognize that they do not have inner fortitude to respond to the constant needs of a community. The call demands a complete willingness to serve others and commitment far beyond one's own self-interest.

An authentic call is received with reluctance and often outright refusal. The rigors of training and the constant demands of service at all hours of the day, the all-night healing rituals, rigid **taboos** restricting food and sex, and other extreme **sacrifices** are often too much. The spirits can be severe demanding the sacrifice of one human from the shaman's relatives for each bone of the shaman. In North **Siberia** many shamans reveal that they try to refuse the call because the sacrifice is too great. For those who refuse, even if just to protect their relatives, the spirits continue to be demanding, creating blindness, depression, sickness, chronic mishap, and general disharmony or death for the individual and family members of those who refuse them.

In **Southeast Asia** there are few, if any, references to human sacrifice, however there are many references to illness, misfortune, and mental torment that appear suddenly when the call is refused and disappear just as suddenly when the novice surrenders to the will of the spirits. There are many stories from cultures around the globe of severe ailments disappearing completely when

the initiate surrenders to the call and serves as a shaman. Though this may seem severe to the contemporary mind these personal afflictions are no more severe than the illness, **pain**, and death that results from the poverty, pollution, and bigotry created by cultures who no longer have shamans to heal the wounds of the soul.

In contemporary, non-shamanic cultures, the call often goes unrecognized and refusal occurs by default. The resulting misfortune, depression, or illness is often considered part of normal contemporary life. It may be in the course of healing these afflictions that the individual realizes they were called. They may continue to refuse the call because their physical symptoms can be numbed through modern **medicine**, rendering them less demanding than healing, overcoming the resistance to becoming a shaman, or the commitment to a life of service and the surrender of egocentric goals.

Given the sacrifice demanded of the shaman, why respond to the call at all? The experience of the call is also a **mystical experience** where the individual receives a glimpse into the true nature of the Universe and his or her part in it all. The call awakens the knowing of one's true self and the yearning to express that self through the artistry of the shaman. There is a great internal peace that comes to the shaman as they rest between **humility** and power in Oneness with spirit. See also **North America**; **renewal of life**; **sorcery**.

Graboi, Nina. "One Foot in the Future." *Magical Blend* 38 (1993): 57–59.

Heinze, R. I. *Shamans of the 20th Century*. New York: Irvington Publishers, Inc., 1991.

Kalweit, Holger. *Shamans, Healers, and Medicine Men*. Boston: Shambhala Publications, 1992.

Therianthropes

Therianthropes, from the Greek *therion*, animal, and *anthropos*, man, are part

human/part **animal spirit** forms that characterize the deeper stages of journeying **trance** states. As the journeyer progresses more deeply into trance, he or she typically passes through three distinct stages characterized by different types of visual phenomena. The presence of therianthropes, animal and human-like **spirit** beings, is characteristic of the third stage, a deep trance state. See also **journey**.

Theta Waves

There are four major patterns of **brain wave** frequency: delta, theta, alpha, and beta. These patterns are measured by the electroencephalogram (EEG), an instrument that produces drawings of brain wave patterns of humans while they are engaged in various activities. EEG waves are classified according to wave frequency, which is measured in cycles per second, or Hertz (Hz). Each pattern is characterized by a different Hz range.

Theta waves, 4–9 Hz, are associated with the twilight consciousness between waking and sleeping. Theta wave frequency aids entry into **altered states of consciousness** involving hypnogogic imagery, states of **ecstasy**, creativity, and sudden illuminations. This brain wave pattern is difficult for most people to maintain without **training**.

Any external rhythmic pattern of movement, light, or **sound** that incorporates 4–4.5 Hz can effectively induce theta activity. In shamanic rituals, **drums**, **rattles**, and other instruments are played in rhythmic patterns to induce theta activity and promote entry into altered states of consciousness. See also **rhythm**; **ritual**; **sonic driving**.

Maxfield, M. "The Journey of the Drum." *ReVision* 16, no. 4 (Spring 1994): 157–163.

Thread Cross

(Also: God's Eye) A magical **power object** constructed by **shamans** and **priests** in Tibet to temporarily house a deity or to

snare malevolent **spirits** and demons. The thread cross, or *mdos*, is made from two (or more) sticks crossed and bound to form a cross structure. The central vertical stick is called the *srog shing*, or “life tree,” believed to be a reference to its origin in the **Tree of Life**. The ends of the cross are connected with colored thread, round after round, creating a geometric shape. *Mdos* can be complicated structures up to eleven feet high and consisting of many geometric forms and attached objects and sections.

In **ritual**, a thread cross constructed to temporarily house a deity is called a *gtor ma*. When constructed to imprison a demonical deity for a ritual the thread cross is called a *gtang mdos*. After the demonical deity is given instructions to perform, the *gtang mdos* is cast away, freeing the spirit.

When used for protection they are called *brten mdos*. Small *brten mdos* are placed above entrances or on the roofs of homes and huge *mdos* are used to surround monasteries and their grounds. After a *brten mdos* has been used for some time and is full of malevolent energies, it is taken down, broken up, and incompletely burned in a process designed to destroy the malevolent energies captured within. The unburned pieces are taken by laymen and used as protective fetishes. See also **Bön; energy; fetish**.

Nebesky-Wojkowitz, R. *Oracles and Demons of Tibet: The Cult and Iconography of the Tibetan Protective Dieties*. Delhi: Book Faith India, 1996.

Threshold Guardian

The threshold guardian is a **spirit** entity encountered in altered states, particularly those that occur spontaneously. The threshold guardian is often seen in a tall, elongated, dark humanoid form, though not always.

The threshold guardian stands in the four cardinal directions as well as above

and below. It appears when the journeyer has reached the boundaries of his or her present sphere of awareness. Beyond the threshold guardian lies darkness—the Unknown—and the danger of forces that will transform the journeyer. These are the realms into which the journeyer must travel to gain awareness, **energy**, and **power**. These are the familiar realms of the **shaman**.

The threshold guardian functions as a means to keep the unprepared within the boundaries of their current awareness. If the presence of the threshold guardian alone does not frighten the unprepared back into **ordinary consciousness**, the first step beyond that boundary will typically inspire enough fear to cause retreat. The guardians that watch this boundary are dangerous. Dealing with them is risky for the incompetent, fearful, and unprepared.

Threshold guardians are depicted in painted pictographs and engraved petroglyphs of ancient **rock art** around the world. Some of the figures are distinguished by simple forms, like crosses or **spirals**, decorating their dark “torsos.” Very clear examples of these figures can be seen in pictographs from Horseshoe Canyon, Utah. See also **altered states of consciousness** and **journey**.

Time

Shamans, by working in altered states, experience the polychronic nature of time and the multi-dimensional nature of **space**. They are concerned with timing and moving in harmony with the **rhythms** of Nature and the Universe. Some shamanic **cultures** have no concept or word for time.

Leading edge scientists explain that the shape of time is not a straight line that can be broken down into regular intervals, but an irregular fabric that loops back on itself and is full of inconsistencies. A **circle** is perhaps a more accurate symbol for time than a straight line. The line and the circle represent two very strongly different views of time and the world.

The circle is a primary symbol in almost every shamanic culture. One interpretation of the circle is time. The circle represents something that comes back to itself in harmony over and over again. It represents periodicity, vibration, and movement. The shaman sees life as the expression of mythic patterns that come back on themselves in harmony over and over again.

For shamanic societies, time happened in the beginning, in “the time of the **myths**” or the **dreamtime**. The mythic events of the beginning are still happening and will continue as long as there are people, whether or not those people are aware of the mythic patterns that flow through their lives. Time is the simultaneous, creative expression of all that is, that was, and all that will be. See also **altered states of consciousness**.

Eliade, Mircea. *Shamanism: Archaic Techniques of Ecstasy*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1964.

Heinze, R. I. *Shamans of the 20th Century*. New York: Irvington Publishers, Inc., 1991.

Matthews, John, et al. *The Celtic Shaman: A Handbook*. Rockport, MA: Element Books Ltd., 1991.

Villoldo, A. Personal communication, 1994.

Time of Purification

See **Hopi Prophecy**.

Tlahit

Tlahit is the **Wintun** (Nomlaki) term for a **shaman** who is a “**seer**,” but who does not possess the **power** of curing. The *tlahit*’s **trance** is induced while lying on the ground and smoking **tobacco**. In trance, the *tlahit* is able to see the spiritual truth of what is going on in the present and the immediate future, an ability immediately useful in warfare and locating lost people and objects. The *tlahit* usually speaks from trance in a secret **language** that must be interpreted by his or her assistant. See also **shamanic language**.

Lyon, William S. *Encyclopedia of Native American Shamanism: Sacred Ceremonies of North America*. Santa Barbara, CA: ABC-CLIO, 1998.

Tlilitzin

The **Aztec** name for the **plant hallucinogen** made from the seeds of **Morning Glory**, *Ipomoea violacea*, for use in **divination** and shamanic **rituals**. The Aztecs considered *Ipomoea violacea* and *Turbina corymbosa* the **Ololiuqui**.

Toá

A medicinal preparation of **plant hallucinogens**, specifically *Brugmansia aurea*, a species related to *Datura*. *Toá* is utilized in the warmer parts of **South America**, especially western **Amazonia** and the cool highlands above 6,000 ft (1,830 m).

Schultes, Richard Evans, Albert Hofmann, and Christian Rätsch. *Plants of the Gods: Their Sacred, Healing, and Hallucinogenic Powers*. Rochester, VT: Healing Arts Press, 2001.

Tobacco

Tobacco, of the nightshade family, is native to **North America** (e.g., *nicotiana rustica*) and **South America** (e.g., *nicotiana tabacum*). In **healing**, the plant is smoked, snuffed, chewed, or prepared as a syrup which is applied to the gums or tongue, licked, or used as an enema.

Tobacco smoke is used for **cleansing** energy and is prominent in the indigenous healing **rituals** of the Americas. In the Andes, the *payé* blows tobacco smoke over the patient while **singing** the correct **chants** and healing **songs** to cure some ailments. For more serious problems **plant hallucinogens** are necessary and tobacco smoke is used to prepare the patient. Tobacco smoke is blown over the affected part of the body prior to the deeper healing.

Tobacco syrups are also used in healings. *Ambil* is tobacco syrup made by

the Witoto of South America. The Witoto boil tobacco leaves down to a molasses-like consistency. **Water** is leached through alkaline ashes of various burned forest **trees** and allowed to evaporate, leaving a "salt." This salt is added to the syrup to release its bioactive compounds, making *ambil*.

Tobacco **spirit** often presents itself to the **shaman** in the form of various **birds**, depending on the **culture**. For example, the Guianan people see Tukayana, the tobacco spirit, as a vulture, a vulture-man without his **feather** cloak, or four large-king vultures. See also **Andes**, **South America**; **ash**; **energy**.

Schultes, R. E., and R. F. Raffauf. *Vine of the Soul: Medicine Men, Their Plants and Rituals in the Colombian Amazonia*. Santa Fe, NM: Synergetic Press, 2004.

Toloache

Central American name for a sacred **plant hallucinogen** made from *Datura* that induces a deep and intense **trance** state. This highly toxic **entheogen** is used by **shamans** and plays a fundamental role in **initiation** rituals into adulthood. See also **ritual** and **sacred**.

Tonal Spirit

Tonal **animal spirits** are believed by native peoples of Mexico and Guatemala to determine an individual's **ordinary reality** life experiences. Tonal animals are not to be confused with the **nagual** animal of the **shamans** of this region. Tonal spirits are connected to an individual's **vital soul** based on their birth date, similar to the way the animals of the zodiac signs or the Asian calendar are associated with individuals by their birth date and used to describe qualities of the individual and the individual's life.

Harner, Michael J. *The Way of the Shaman*. San Francisco: Harper-Collins, 1990.

Tongochim

(Also: *tunosim*) *Tongochim* is the **gender-variant** shaman, or *berdache* (*berdach*), of the Yokut, a people of the San Joaquin Valley of central California in **North America**. The Yokuts believed that the *tongochim* is born into their gender-variant nature, meaning that this unique gender was seen as an aspect of his or her **original medicine**. Thus, **the call** to the role as *tongochim* is a response to an irresistible call of their spiritual nature, not a delegation or election to their status. An aspect of the *tongochim*'s responsibilities was to prepare the dead for burial. See also **transformed shaman**.

Kalweit, Holger. *Dreamtime and Inner Space: The World of the Shaman*. Boston: Shambhala Publications, 1988.

Williams, W. L. *The Spirit and the Flesh*. Boston: Beacon Press, 1992.

Tornarsuk

One of many types of *torngraq*, or **helping spirits**, utilized by the *angakut* (**shamans**) of East **Greenland**. The *angakok* summons the *tornarsuk* to answer questions during **divination** sessions. However, the powerful *tornarsuk* is particularly dangerous because it is known to steal **souls**. The *angakok* summons the *aperketek*, another **spirit** who acts as a mediator between the *angakok* and the *tornarsuk*. Among the Aleut *tornarsuk* is a general term for helping spirit, while in other **Eskimo** regions the term is not used at all.

Lyon, William S. *Encyclopedia of Native American Shamanism: Sacred Ceremonies of North America*. Santa Barbara, CA: ABC-CLIO, 1998.

Torngak

A unique **helping spirit** or *torngraq* of the Labrador **Eskimo** shamans. The Labrador **shamans** acquire only one *torngak*, unlike other Eskimo *angakut*

who acquire multiple *torngraq*, sometimes fifty or more. The *torngak* is a **spirit** being that has no past or present relationship with a physical form. They take many forms, some fiery and elemental and some unrecognizable. Through the appropriate **rituals** they can be embodied in an object to create an **amulet** or **fetish**. See also **embodiment**.

Lyon, William S. *Encyclopedia of Native American Healing*. New York: W. W. Norton & Company, 1996.

Torngraq

The **helping spirit** of the *angakok* (shaman). *Torngrat*, *torngädt* (pl) is in the **language** of the Iglulik of the Arctic Coast, and some dialectical variants are *tôrnaq* (s), *tôrnat* (pl) from West **Greenland**, and *torngak* (s), *tornait* (pl) from Labrador.

The *torngraq* are the *angakok*'s primary **teachers** and the source of shamans' **power**. To acquire *torngraq* the novice must spend time alone in the vast emptiness of the Arctic and pray for one or more of the powerful **animal spirits** to come to his or her aid. These animal spirits, like the Dog, Owl, or Shark, often appear in human form.

As with all **shamans**, the **spirits** choose the shaman. The novice has no choice in the *torngraq* who comes or that one comes at all. However, some parents prepared for the birth of a shaman in their child by observing particularly strict **taboos** during pregnancy beyond those practiced by the **culture** at large. Through their actions they hoped to influence the *torngraq* to favor their child/shaman with a healthy childhood and later with a powerful **song** through which to call the *torngraq* into his body to enter the **healing** trance of the shaman.

Among the Iglulik and **Inuit**, the relationship between the *angakok* and the *torngraq* runs very deep, emotionally, psychologically, and spiritually. The *angakok* experiences great joy **singing** the **power song** that calls the *torngraq*

into his body and even greater **ecstasy** as he enters **trance** and travels in the spirit world. The *angakok* **sings** with the voice of his *torngraq* while in trance. This joy so easily given by the *torngraq* turns easily to sorrow and depression if the *torngraq* should decide to leave, terminating the relationship indefinitely.

Lyon, William S. *Encyclopedia of Native American Healing*. New York: W. W. Norton & Company, 1996.

_____. *Encyclopedia of Native American Shamanism: Sacred Ceremonies of North America*. Santa Barbara, CA: ABC-CLIO, 1998.

Torniwoq

The shamanic **rituals** of the East Greenland *angakok* (**shaman**), during which the *angakok* performs *ilimarneq*, or spirit flight. There are four traditional reasons the *angakok* was called upon to perform a *torniwoq*: a scarcity of sea animals for hunting, snow masses or fjord ice blocking the ways to the hunting places, **soul loss**, and infertility in a married woman.

The binding of the *angakok* is characteristic of the *torniwoq*, as is the *angakok*'s *ilimarneq*. The *angakok*'s hands and elbows are bound tightly behind his back, with a long thong that is sometimes tied also to the knees and neck. When the *angakok*'s **soul** returns from its **journey** the *angakok*'s body will be magically freed of its bonds. See also **Greenland**.

Lyon, William S. *Encyclopedia of Native American Shamanism: Sacred Ceremonies of North America*. Santa Barbara, CA: ABC-CLIO, 1998.

Tornrak

The **helping spirits**, or *torngraq*, of the Copper **Eskimo shamans**. These helping **spirits** are distinguished from *tarrait*, the **souls** of dead humans and animals. The *tornrak* never lived as animals or humans. They can appear, disappear,

and change form at will. *Tornrak* often appear in human-like form with some extreme or peculiar characteristic like a distorted face or unnaturally long hair.

Lyon, William S. *Encyclopedia of Native American Healing*. New York: W. W. Norton & Company, 1996.

Totem Spirits

A type of **animal spirits** that are inherited through the family line by all members of the family. The clans of many **cultures**, e.g., Pacific coast of **North America**, **Aboriginals** in **Australia**, etc., are identified by their totem animals. The connection of a clan or family to a totem animal is based on the recognition of a common nature (qualities, skills, talents) and the collective participation between humans and animals everywhere in nature.

Animal spirits are **helping spirits** in animal form who are able to transcend the abilities of that animal in its ordinary existence, e.g., anacondas flying without wings or fish swimming through mountains. Though they express their **power** through their extraordinary abilities like **power animals**, totem spirits do not necessarily help the **shaman** in shamanic work. This varies culture to culture.

There are many ways to receive or embody the power of one's totem animal. In some cultures eating the animal in **ordinary reality** is a way to directly assimilate the animal's power and teaching. In other cultures a shaman must observing a strict **taboo** against eating the flesh of the animal to maintain a relationship with the animal. In many cultures the totem animal is honored by wearing the skins, **feathers**, or a symbolic representation of the animal. In most cultures the relationship with the totem animal is honored through animal-like dancing that occurs when the individual merges with the **spirit** of the animal and allows that animal to **dance** through his or her body during **ritual** or **ceremony**. See also **embodiment**.

Kalweit, Holger. *Shamans, Healers, and Medicine Men*. Boston: Shambhala Publications, 1992.

Trago

Trago is a pure cane alcohol used by **shamans** throughout the Andes and **Amazonia** for **cleansings**, **purification**, camaying, and creating **fire**. See also **Andes**, **South America** and *camay*.

Training

"Though the gods give shamans their miraculous powers, shamans must learn the technique of invoking them."

—Korean Proverb

The function of training is to develop skills and talents so that **shamans** don't hurt themselves or others unintentionally. During training the shaman learns to control psychic and physiological functions, to regulate body chemistry and the transformation of **energy** internally, and to master concentration and contemplation techniques.

When the shaman is working with **helping spirits** in the spirit world or embodying a helping spirit in the physical world, they experience themselves as a limitless being. Limitless **power** is a great responsibility that demands impeccability in thought, word, and deed. Training enables the shaman to bear both the power and responsibility with skill and **humility**, so that others are not harmed through the shaman's ignorance or hubris.

The training of a shaman is unique to each **culture**, and can be different for different individuals within the same culture, particularly if that culture spreads over vastly different geographical regions. The training may also vary depending on the helping spirit(s) that the shaman is working with. There are, however, four basic principles found in shamanic training practices across all cultures.

1. *Change in awareness due to supernatural event(s)*: The true nature

of the universe beyond four-dimensional **time** and **space** is glimpsed or revealed in a sudden, qualitative shift of consciousness. As a result, **healing** powers (inborn or acquired) manifest in the person's life, becoming available for use. These events may be subtle, as in a **dream** or moment of revelation, or they may be quite dramatic as in a bout with physical or mental **illness**.

2. *Training develops the shaman's worldview:* The individual engages in some process of gaining spiritual **knowledge**, skills, personal healing, and power. While engaged in this process, insights into **sacred** wisdom are revealed such that a new worldview grows organically, expanding ever larger and more intricately and elegantly. A shaman's power is directly proportional to the depth and breadth of that individual's awareness of the true nature of the **Kosmos**.
3. *Individual talents emerge:* These specialties are usually related to the individual's own life and the personal healing **journey** that brings him/her to this point in their life. For example, those who have recovered from being struck by lightning often heal with the power of lightning, or individuals of man/woman **gender**, having achieved an internal balance between the masculine and feminine, are quite gifted in helping individuals of all genders to find their own inner balance.
4. *The training ends in a test or initiation:* The **initiation** may be traditional or spontaneous, depending on the cultural expectations, structure of the training, and relationship with the **teacher**. This test may be as simple as a successful healing **ritual** with the first client or as intense as the Maori initiation that requires splitting a stone or tree and killing a bird or

human using only *karakia* (ritual chanting) and **prayer**.

Shamanic training allows the individual to understand other worlds with extrasensory perception in the same way that our normal senses enable us to understand this ordinary, physical world. Through training the shaman develops the ability to use higher human potential, developing eyes that see the invisible world, ears that hear the **words** of spirit, and sensory and emotional feelings that are no longer limited and censored by the shaman's past experiences and old personal identification.

The desired expansion of sensory perception, humility, and spiritual insight are achieved by including one or more of the following in the training process: fasting, motionlessness, prolonged solitude, monotonous chanting, vomiting, enemas, complete separation from the community, and freedom from normal daily tasks. These practices weaken the mind's structure of beliefs and limitations by disrupting physical, mental, emotional, and spiritual patterns that reinforce these stable habits. An internal **chaos** ensues in which the body and mind are able to transform.

The structure of shamanic training falls into one or more of three categories:

1. *Apprentice/Spirit Teacher*—the candidate works with a teacher or teachers who are in spirit form. The spirit chooses the candidate, often suddenly, and the candidate must surrender control to the teachings of the spirit. This is a one-on-one relationship that demands a great deal of creativity, flexibility, and perseverance. Early on in the candidate's training the helping spirit creates experiences, primarily in the spirit world, to strengthen the candidate's weaknesses and teach him/her the fundamentals of healing. The spirit also teaches the unique ways that individuals will practice healing in relationship with their helping

spirits. There are many examples of this type of training; the one common to many cultures is the lightning shaman. These individuals are struck by lightning and thus selected by lightning spirit. If they recover and recognize the event as their call to shamanic work, they will continue their training. Later, as the individual has gathered power and skills, he or she may “hunt” a particular spirit teacher to learn particular types of healing or to gain access to specific kinds of power.

This is the form every shaman's training will ultimately take after initiation, whether the initial training was with a human teacher, spirit teacher, or in a school. **Shamanic healing** is a path of mastery; the shaman will continue learning from the helping spirits and the Source of all things throughout his or her lifetime.

2. *Apprentice/Mentor*—the candidate works with a shaman in physical form who has a strong reputation and great power. This is a one-on-one relationship; it has as much structure as the particular **apprentice** and mentor bring to it. This relationship is often seen within families where the teaching is being handed down from generation to generation: parent to child, grandparent to grandchild, or aunt or uncle to nephew or niece. When a candidate seeks out a particular teacher, there may or may not be an exchange of money or barter for the teaching. This varies culture to culture and is based on cultural precedent.

3. *Schools for shamans*—the candidate works with established shamans in physical form through a highly ordered training process that is, for the most part, the same for all candidates within a group and between one group and the next. The relationship may or may not be one on one, however the process itself is highly structured

and based on culture and tradition, as with the **Midewin Society** of the **Ojibwa** (North America) and the rigid structure of the **Zulu** (Africa) and the Blackfoot (North America) training. Shaman schools often arise in cultures where the shaman is expected to accurately memorize large bodies of information, like genealogies or the parts of the landscape that the spirits of each of the tribe's **ancestors** now inhabit. The healing **kahuna** tradition of **Hawaii** demands mastery of a huge body of **chants**, **dances**, and ceremonies, as well as skills in **divination** and healing. Similarly, Korean shamans who, along with healing arts and divination, must also master dancing, musical instruments, chants, and the correct preparation of **offerings** of food, paper flowers, and figures for each **ceremony**. There may or may not be an exchange of money or barter for the teaching. This varies culture to culture and is based on cultural precedent.

The singular consistent result of shamanic training is the expansion of the shaman's awareness to embrace a multi-dimensional worldview that is no longer bound by the physical laws of time and space. Shamanic training creates individuals who express a sincere desire to serve, humility in the face of miracles, and relative freedom from small personal, ego-centered goals. **Transpersonal** psychological training and consciousness development occurs for the shaman during their training. It is logical to assume that the relationship between the individual and the spirits plays some role in forming this worldview since the training of all shamans involves developing a working relationship with one or more helping spirits. Largely because of this working relationship the shaman experiences a continuing expansion of consciousness, commitment to service, and mastery of both the everyday and the spirit worlds.

Shamanic training prepares the individual by transferring an expanded worldview and the knowledge of tools and techniques that have worked in the past. The initiated shaman knows how to use the tools of the past and is able to adapt them if necessary to respond to the energies of the present moment to create effective healing rituals. Each shamanic ritual is unique because the circumstances and conditions of the clients differ each time.

Because there are many workshops presented today that teach shamanic techniques to the lay person, it is important to note the distinction between learning shamanic methods for personal healing and self-exploration and the training of a shaman who will use shamanic techniques to meet the needs of the community. The shaman's training and initiation into the shamanic worldview sets his or her personal healing process apart from his or her shamanic healing practices. They are related, but the distinction—usually defined by the initiatory experience—is clear for the shaman. This distinction and separation is not clear for the uninitiated.

Shamanic training, with few exceptions, involves prolonged periods of physical, emotional, intellectual, and spiritual training during which time the individual's conscious aim becomes service, not ego, oriented so that they can become clear and accurate **vehicles** and translators of the transcendental knowledge gathered from spirit. The shaman becomes a mediator between the spirit world and the physical world to fulfill the specific needs of the community. How they do this depends on the contract with the spiritual world. It can be a short-term commitment or it can consume the rest of a shaman's life. See also **aboriginal; Africa; embodiment; Korea; North America; pattern recognition; the call.**

Heinze, R. I. *Shamans of the 20th Century*. New York: Irvington Publishers, Inc., 1991.

Kalweit, Holger. *Shamans, Healers, and Medicine Men*. Boston: Shambhala Publications, 1992.

Trance

Shamanic trance consists of a diverse range of **alternate states of consciousness** used by the **shaman** to perform the tasks of his or her profession. These altered states are experienced by the shaman as different from his or her ordinary, day-to-day, waking consciousness. In trance the invisible world of **spirit** becomes visible, allowing the shaman to communicate with **helping spirits** and to see the true source of a patient's problem. The shaman's experience of these trance states is often ecstatic.

The crucial element of the shaman's trance is the control of the trance state. The shaman does not master the spirits, so much as he or she masters the trance and the resulting working relationship with spirit. Mastery of trance demands impeccable control of entrance into and duration of trance, memory and interpretation of the trance experience, and the ability to communicate that experience during and after in a way that is transformative for the patient and/or audience.

All of the altered states in this diverse set of trance phenomena include the experiential features of control and mastery. The shaman is a trance specialist. The profession involves the production and social employment of the ecstatic altered states. These different trance states are used on behalf of the community to address issues that arise from birth, death, sickness, **sorcery**, and the need for **healing**.

The purpose of the shaman's trance is not autonomous as in meditation and yoga traditions. The shaman does not seek enlightenment nor does he or she seek detachment from the external world. The shaman's trance is outwardly oriented toward the community with the goal of serving as a medium of communication and action between the spirit world and that of humankind.

In 1935 in the *Psychomental Complex of the Tungus*, one of the most authoritative ethnographic studies of Siberian **shamanism**, S. M. Shirokogoroff posits that the most basic attribute of the shaman's trance is the "mastery of spirits," or **possession**. The **Tungus** distinguish between an involuntary possession trance, which is an **illness**, and the voluntary possession trance of the shaman who "possesses spirits" to cure the possession illnesses of others. This type of **embodiment** trance is reported in the shamanism of various other **cultures**.

In contrast other scholars, most prominently Mircea Eliade in 1964, in *Shamanism: Archaic Techniques of Ecstasy*, contend that the true shaman's trance is the visionary **ecstasy** of spirit flight. In this trance state, the inverse of possession, the shaman's soul **journeys** into the spirit realm, and the shaman sees or has **visions** of ascending and descending to other worlds. Eliade, also looking at Siberian shamanism, posits that possession is a later, degenerate form of spirit flight, in spite of his observation that the shaman's possession trance was an effective, universally distributed phenomena. This type of spirit flight or journeying trance is reported in the shamanism of a variety of cultures.

Practitioners caution against viewing the shaman's trance as exclusive to either. The type of trance used by a shaman has a great deal to do with what the shaman is trying to accomplish through the trance. Any definition of the shaman's trance must include both spirit flight and spirit embodiment, the full range of altered states between, and the understanding that these trance states can exist separately or coexist to various degrees throughout a **shamanic healing** ritual.

There are shamans, particularly in African cultures, who attain full control and mastery of their trance states without any reference to "mastering the spirits." For these shamans the healing powers are believed to emanate from the energy and magic inside of the

shaman, not from helping spirits. The trance state is used by the shaman to activate and use these healing powers.

The common element of all of these accounts is that the shaman, no matter whether the trance experience is interpreted as spirit flight or spirit embodiment, remains in control of his or her trance. Furthermore, the shaman is able to use that trance state for the reasons the shaman entered the trance to begin with. The shaman's control and volition change what is **soul loss** for the individual into **soul flight** for the shaman and what is possession for the individual into embodiment for the shaman.

This distinction illuminates the important connection between the shaman's **training** and his or her social function. During training the shaman learns to master possession and to intentionally call spirits into his or her body. The shaman also learns to turn soul loss into mastery of soul flight, or journeying, and send his or her **soul** back and forth into the spirit world at will. The mastery of embodiment and soul flight trance states qualifies the shaman to heal his or her patients and **apprentices** who suffer from spirit possession and soul loss.

Discipline

Shamans learn to induce and master trance experiences as part of a defined discipline that is more than learning a set of techniques. Though there are many cultural variations of this discipline, at its core there is always a master/apprentice relationship, regardless of whether the master is in human form or exists as a spirit being. Mastering the trance discipline involves a system of psychological techniques and prescribed types of **altered states of consciousness** whose goal is the psychological transformation of the apprentice.

Techniques to Enter Trance

Shamans use a variety, and often a combination, of techniques to induce altered states of consciousness. These include: seclusion, **silence**, solitude,

sleep deprivation, visual and/or sensory deprivation, dehydration, fasting, **pain** stimulation, repetitious actions, like grinding or weaving, jumping, running, sexual activity, visualization, drumming, dancing, instruments like bowstrings and bells, chanting, and ingesting **psychotropic plants**.

Many of these techniques set up a monotonous **rhythm** with an instrument or through the body. These regular, monotonous rhythms function as “**vehicles**” for the shaman who rides this thread of rhythm into and out of the altered state of consciousness. For example, percussion instruments like the **drum** may facilitate trance states when beaten at certain rapid rates. Psychotropic plants also serve as vehicles for the shaman to enter trance.

Some cultures use focused concentration or meditation-like means to enter trance. These shamans, like the Australian **Aboriginal** shamans for example, sit or lie in quiet contemplative states when communicating with the supernatural and performing magical acts.

The common element of all of these accounts is that the shaman, no matter how the trance state is induced, is not overwhelmed by the intensity of the experience. He or she remains in control of his or her trance and manipulates it in the service of his or her community.

Communication

From a cross-cultural perspective, the shaman communicates with the patient and/or the audience in the majority of cultures. For example, shamans of the **Shuar** in **South America** and the Tungus of **Siberia** narrate their trance journeys and the progress of the healings while they simultaneously answer questions put to them by the patient and audience. In cultures where the shaman and the audience interact to a high degree, the audience participation may actually support the shaman on his or her journey through continuous **singing**, chanting, and encouragement.

Symbolic Language

The meaning of the images and experiences of the shaman in trance are not absolute or fixed. The experience is referential and must be interpreted relative to the shaman's reason for being in the trance. For example, the trance experience is interpreted relative to the patient's illness or the desire for a successful hunt. The shaman must maintain focus on his or her reason for being in the trance to accurately interpret the events and information experienced there.

The shaman uses a unique, **symbolic language** that is relevant and has meaning for the community to describe his or her journey. The symbolic language is crucial; it is the bridge between the worlds experienced by the shaman and the **ordinary reality** of the audience. The symbols and experiences brought forth from the shaman's trance must be both transformative for the shaman and empathic for the audience. A successful shaman must adapt his or her symbolic language to the role and expectations of the community.

It is not enough that the shaman has visions and enters into controlled trance states. The shaman must communicate to give form to these trance experiences so they will serve the community. The socio-cultural context provides the cultural setting for proper perspective of the shaman's trance performances and **initiations**. Without this background, the shaman's beliefs might seem idiosyncratic, unrelated, and removed from social reality. See also **Africa**; **Australia**; **chant**; **dance**; **non-ordinary reality**; **ritual**.

Eliade, Mircea. *Shamanism: Archaic Techniques of Ecstasy*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1964.

Peters, L. G. *Ecstasy and Healing in Nepal: An Ethnopsychiatric Study of Tamang Shamanism*. Malibu, CA: Undena Publications, 1981.

———, and D. Price-Williams. “Towards an Experimental Analysis of Shamanism.” *American Ethnologist* 7, no. 3 (1980): 397–413.

Shirokogorov, S. M. *Psychomental Complex of the Tungus*. Brooklyn, NY: AMS Press, Inc., 1980.

Trance (Short)

Trance states are often described in two extremes. One is the ecstatic **soul flight** characterized by immobility, **silence**, solitude, no crisis, sensory deprivation, recollection, and **visions** of a **journey** through the spirit world. The other is an **embodiment** trance characterized by a radical alteration of the self, movement, noise, crisis, sensory overstimulation, amnesia, and visions of the spirit dimensions of this **ordinary reality**.

These two trance states can be seen as opposite ends of a spectrum of altered states used by the **shaman**. Some trance states may show qualities of both. The shaman moves freely along this spectrum of trance possibilities within a **healing** session.

Scholars who do extensive fieldwork with shamans consistently observe shamans using both magical flight and intentional **possession** in their work. Shamans pass through a series of altered states or depths of trance during any one session until they reach the level that is necessary for the particular healing or the level at which they operate best. The process of passing through increasingly deep states of possession may last from just minutes to half an hour. See also **altered states of consciousness** and **ecstasy**.

Heinze, R. I. *Shamans of the 20th Century*. New York: Irvington Publishers, Inc., 1991.

Peters, L. G., and D. Price-Williams. "Towards an Experimental Analysis of Shamanism." *American Ethnologist* 7, no. 3 (1980): 397-413.

Transcultural Medicine

Transcultural medical practices result when two or more systems of **medicine** are used for the purpose of curing a patient. At the end of the twentieth

century there are two distinct systems of medicine: allopathic medicine, which regards the body as a machine made up of many separate parts, and complementary or holistic medicine, which regards the human being as a whole made up of the interdependent relation of body, mind, and **soul**.

In many **cultures** around the world patients are crossing the boundaries between the holistic systems, the shamanic systems of indigenous peoples, and the scientific system of Western cultures. For example, on most reservations in **North America**, the Native American population uses the best of both traditional and Western systems, thus creating a need for transcultural medical procedures.

Where patients have the option, they will often go to indigenous practitioners for **diseases** caused in the spirit world and to modern allopathic physicians for treatment of diseases like tuberculosis or appendicitis, which are believed to be nonsupernatural in origin. In some areas the distinction is made between "white man sickness," which are the diseases brought to the Americas by Euroamericans, and traditional illnesses that have been treated by **shamans** and medicine people for thousands of years.

This distinction is particularly clear in the area of psychotherapy, where the origins of mental **illness** are largely supernatural and social from the point of view of traditional **healing** systems. In illustration of this point, in the late 1900s Brazil's mental institutions were filled beyond capacity with mentally ill patients that the psychiatric profession was largely unable to cure. One institution was turned over to Brazilian Spiritist healers who practice a mixture of religious and indigenous **shamanic healing**. In two years the entire population of patients was healed and discharged, now able to function in contemporary Brazil without medication.

In North America the indigenous population exhibits greater confidence in traditional medicine people and shamans than in alien psychotherapists.

The indigenous practitioner anchors his or her practice in the spirit world, a world the indigenous person knows from daily experience to be the most powerful force, interrelating all aspects of life. The psychiatrist, on the other hand, anchors his or her practice in a system of beliefs and references drawn from a foreign culture whose limited belief in the spirit world renders the psychiatric system significantly less creditable for the indigenous person.

Ake Hultkrantz, Professor Emeritus of Comparative Religion at the University of Stockholm, reports that the inadequacy of Western medicine from a Native American perspective is three-fold. There is, first, a lack of holistic concepts and practice; secondly, an overvalued focus on physical biochemical aspects; and thirdly, a neglect of psychosocial and cultural aspects of ill health and treatment. Native Americans report a clear superiority of indigenous therapies in the treatment of psychological problems and in effecting positive personality changes.

More and more, Westerners are crossing these medical boundaries, for reasons based on similar criticisms of allopathic practices. People of all cultural backgrounds are turning to shamans and traditional indigenous healers for treatment of the spiritual, emotional, and psychological wounds of contemporary life when they do not find the offerings of Western medicine effective. As a result, doctors of both systems are working with ever increasing cooperation where the patient population demands it.

Traditional practitioners began referring patients to allopathic doctors when they arrived with their antibiotics and medications for physical diseases like malaria and tuberculosis. Traditional practitioners tend to refer when medication is believed to be a superior cure or when guided to do so by spirit helpers. For example, **Sun Dance** leaders among the Crow of North America refer patients to hospitals for particular remedies such as cough and heart medicines.

They also refer patients to the hospital if they get a message that their powers are not strong enough for that particular illness.

The true movement toward transcultural medicine began when allopathic doctors, recognizing the areas where traditional doctors offer superior cures, began referring patients the other way across cultural lines. For example, on some Navajo reservations in North America traditional **singing** ceremonies (healings) are permitted in the hospital after treatment by Western physicians. Traditional medicine people know that they have cured or prolonged the lives of people who turned to them when the allopathic system offered no cure.

As time goes on transcultural practitioners are emerging. For example, Lewis Mehl-Madrona integrates lessons from traditional Native American healers into his work as a physician and psychologist. In northern Alberta, Canada, Cree healer Russell Willier uses **helping spirits** to diagnose and to prescribe herbal teas and ointments. All of Willier's treatments are accompanied by tobacco **offerings**. Due to the success of Willier's medical activity he has created a health center where other traditional native healers work with patients. Their collective aim is cooperation with Western doctors, not integration. See also **dance; psychotherapeutic practices; tobacco**.

Hultkrantz, A. "Interaction Between Native and Euroamerican Curing Methods." *Shaman's Drum* 31 (Spring 1993): 23-31.

Transfiguration

The ability of the **shaman** to transform his or her own form into that of a **helping spirit**. This phenomenon is widespread in **shamanism** and is commonly referred to as **shapeshifting**. The purpose of transfiguration is to fully embody the luminous **energy** of the **spirit**, in essence to become that spirit. This enables the shaman to better use

and/or learn from that spirit energy. Typical shamanic transfigurations include changing into animals, plants, or deities, usually through inducing an **embodiment** trance. See also **trance**.

Transformed Shaman

Transformed shamans are biological males who transform their **gender** from masculine to feminine to become **shamans**. "Transformed" refers to the gender metamorphosis that occurs within the male as he becomes female. Transformed shamans are also called "**soft shamans**," which refers to the fluidity of their sexual and gender identification. Transformed shamans are seen by their **culture** as belonging to a third or alternate gender. This transformation is expected of men becoming shamans and is sanctioned by their culture.

Transformed shamans appear primarily in cultures where the shamans are traditionally women. Male or female, the novice is first called by **spirit**, then **training** begins. However, boys called to become transformed shamans must first become female, then become a shaman. The transformation begins with learned behavior and outward changes, then progresses through sexual and physical transformation.

Transformed shamans emerged in the Paleolithic era (2,500,000–10,000 B.C.E.) particularly among the Araucanians, **Chukchee**, Kamchadal, the Asiatic **Eskimo**, occasionally by the **Koryak**, Indonesians (Sea Dyak), Burmese Patagonians, Arapaho, Cheyenne, Ute, Zuñi, and other indigenous people of **North America** (though not limited to these cultures). These **gender-variant** shamans represented for their communities a sphere of spiritual powers that exists beyond the male-female polarity. They comprise a special class of androgynous shamans, who may have unique functions that vary culture to culture.

Five Stages of Transformation

There are five general stages of transformation, with some stages appearing more or less pronounced depending on

the culture. The first stage is **the call** from the spirit world, which usually comes to the gender-variant shaman in pre-adolescent childhood in the form of **dreams** or **visions**. In most cultures the parents of the boy arrange a **ritual** of choosing into which the boy is thrust without preparation. The boy's actions, taken in the ritual context, determine the acceptance of his calling. From this point in his life his special status is recognized within the community.

The call from the spirits can not be ignored without repercussions. Though the nature of the repercussions varies, the spiritual interventions often take the form of pervasive visions of things culturally related to gender-variant shamans. If the boy's reluctance persists, the interventions may intensify, disrupting his life, his family, and in extreme cases his entire community.

In the second and third stages of transformation, the traditional male gender is abandoned and that of the female is adopted. The second stage involves the outward transformation. The boy is treated as a girl, in dress and hair style, and in some cultures he receives a new, female name. The third stage involves the training by the women in skills necessary to fulfill the culture's female gender roles. This is a significant change in the indigenous cultures that have clearly defined work and responsibilities for each gender. The boy must leave behind all activities, mannerisms, characteristics, even the **language** of other boys and learn those of girls and women.

After adolescence, the fourth stage, training in shamanic techniques, begins. The boy is apprenticed to a female shaman or an elder transformed shaman or he continues to learn from his **helping spirits**. The fifth stage involves **initiation** into the art of being the receptive partner in sexual intercourse. This initiation often has a sexual component and/or training in practices of **sacred** sex.

Completion of these five stages of transformation is marked by an initiation

ceremony, after which the individual is recognized by the community as an androgynous transformed shaman. In some cultures there is a sixth stage of transformation that continues over time as the shaman completes his physical gender transformation.

In the early twentieth century there were still stories told of older *koe'kcuc*, the transformed shamans of the Chukchee, who succeeded in a true physical transformation with the aid of their *ke'let*, helping spirits. The *koe'kcuc* were believed to embody their *ke'let* so completely that they physically transformed their male genitalia to female. Ya'tirgin, male companion of the *koe'kcuc* Tilu'wgi, "confessed that he hoped that in time, with the aid of the *ke'let*, Tilu'wgi would be able to equal the real 'soft men' of old, and to change the organs of his sex altogether."

The transformed shamans were considered the most powerful in some cultures. Female shamans were the next most powerful and untransformed male shamans the least. A community's relationship with its shamans is often complicated, involving a mixture of fear and respect. People often resort to ridicule, particularly around powerful transformed shamans, to alleviate their own discomfort with the shaman's **power** and gender variance.

Death

Many cultures believed that transformed shamans would retain their gender-variant identity in the spirit world. To show respect for their unique gender and power, the transformed shamans were buried on their own special hill. In other cultures the **souls** of the transformed shamans were believed to join the female shamans in their special spirit village in the **Upperworld**. In the cultures where everyone was buried together the transformed shamans were usually buried on the men's side of the cemetery. However, they were dressed for burial in ways that represented their role as transformed shamans and their status as "not-men."

Shapeshifting

Shapeshifting by shamans is recorded in the oral traditions of cultures all over the world. However, the transformation of gender discussed here is a particular kind of change that is distinct from other shapeshifting in that it is both permanent and necessary for the man to become a shaman.

Shapeshifting is the art of transforming into other forms, like animals, **nature spirits**, deities, or other helping spirits. Shamans gather power, **knowledge**, and the experience of Oneness-with-All-Things through shapeshifting. They may also use this technique to cure or assure the survival of others. A shaman can learn a great deal by shapeshifting his or her gender as well. The intention in this act, which is elective and impermanent, is somewhat different than the transformation of a gender-variant shaman.

The reverse gender transformation of female to male was not expected in any culture as a condition for a woman to become a shaman. There are stories of female shamans temporarily shapeshifting into men. However, these women shapeshift after they are initiated shamans, not as an essential part of the process of becoming shamans. In these stories the female shaman transforms to hunt or to accomplish some traditional male gender role task to save the village or other loved ones. This shapeshifting is not permanent. The intent in this elective transformation is different than the requirement to transform, whether that requirement originates in the spirit world or in the expectations of the community.

In cultures where shamans tended to be male, a woman does not have to become a man, dress like a man, or act like a man in any way to become a shaman. She is called by the spirits and trained as the men are.

Shamans must work with the spirits that call them into the practice, regardless of gender. The gender of helping spirits is not dependent on the gender of the shaman. Though the gender of the spirits may play a part in creating

transformed shamans, it does not explain why female shamans who embody male spirits are not required to permanently transform.

Native Americans explain the difference in this way. Masculine qualities are half of ordinary humanness. But feminine qualities are more than half, automatically encompassing the masculine, as well as many other characteristics that go beyond the limits of male and female. Consequently, these cultures recognize a special status for men who have the ability to transcend the limits of their masculinity while acknowledging that women are limitless by nature. See also *angakok*; **animal spirits**; **apprentice**; *basir*; *berdache* (*berdach*); **death and dying**; **dual nature**; **embodiment**; **Iban Dyak**; *manang bali*; **Mapuche**; **Ngaju Dyak**; *paksu mudang*; *sangoma*; **Two Spirit**.

Conner, Randy P. *Blossom of Bone: Reclaiming the Connections Between Homoeroticism and the Sacred*. San Francisco: HarperCollins, 1993.

Eliade, Mircea. *Shamanism: Archaic Techniques of Ecstasy*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1964.

Williams, W. L. *The Spirit and the Flesh*. Boston: Beacon Press, 1992.

Transmutation

Transmutation is the ability to transform objects or substances into other substances or forms. The ability of the **shaman** to transform his or her own form into animals or plants is referred to as **shapeshifting**. Common shamanic transmutations involve animating an animal skin or object or changing an object from one form to another. In **shamanism** and **sorcery** there is an object, a *tupilak*, that is animated from parts of dead animals and the sorcerers' own **energy**. See also **power objects**.

Lyon, William S. *Encyclopedia of Native American Shamanism: Sacred Ceremonies of North America*. Santa Barbara, CA: ABC-CLIO, 1998.

Transpersonal

Transpersonal experiences are perceived by the individual to extend beyond the ordinary sense of self to connect with a wider awareness of reality and the **Kosmos** in which the individual is a part.

Transpersonal states of consciousness are a related group of states of being characterized by this expanded sense of self. These states of consciousness are central to work in the field of transpersonal psychology.

Transpersonal psychologists acknowledge the possibility of realms and capacities of the mind that transcend the usual ego-centered awareness. They accept the possibility of spiritual sources of wisdom which are transcendent aspects of the **psyche**, above and beyond the ego.

Walsh, Roger. "Phenomenological Mapping: A Method for Describing and Comparing States of Consciousness." *Journal of Transpersonal Psychology* 27, no. 1 (1995): 25–56.

Tree of Life

The Tree of Life is a cross-culturally recurrent symbol for the connection between the realms of the spirit world and the opening between the physical and spiritual realms. For countless **cultures** and **religions** throughout the long history of humankind on **earth**, the Tree of Life is the *axis mundi*, the Center of the World.

The Center of the World, as described by Mircea Eliade, author of the classic study of **shamanism**, *Shamanism: Archaic Techniques of Ecstasy*, is the place "where the **sacred** manifests itself in **space**, the real unveils itself, and the world comes into existence." Eliade continues to explain that it is not just a point of the sacred in the **chaos** of the profane, but it is the place where the worlds connect and beings can pass between the worlds.

The Tree of Life is used by the **shaman** and the **helping spirits** as the

way to move between the worlds. The branches provide a means to climb to the Upperworld and the roots a means to reach the **Lowerworld**. The Tree of Life is also known as the **World Tree**, **World Axis**, Great Tree, or **Cosmic Tree**.

The Tree of Life is represented symbolically by **trees**, pillars, poles, large stone monoliths, mountains, or temples built like mountains. In many cultures a particular type of tree is considered the Tree of Life. For example, the birch for the **Tungus**, the **oak** for the Celts, the **sycamore fig** for ancient Egyptians, and the cedar for the peoples of the Pacific northwestern region of **North America**.

In rain forest regions, like the Amazon, the river may function like the Tree of Life. It is the center of life and the roadway that connects all things.

The Tree of Life appears as the seven-layered teaching glyph in the Judaic Kabbalah, in the Indian ***Rig Veda*** (one of the oldest books in the world), and in the Buddhist *Satapatha Brahmana*. It appears as the world **art**, *Ygdrasil*, in Germanic lore, as *bai si* in Thai ceremonies, as the central pole of the **Sun Dance** in North America, and as *wacah chan* in the glyphs of the **ancient Maya**. The *bo* tree, possibly a Babylonian tree of life, appears on four-thousand-year-old steatite seals and in India the *yupa*, a sacrificial post, is chosen by its assimilation with the Cosmic Tree of Life.

Climbing the Tree of Life is referred to symbolically in stories that tell of ascending seven layers into the **sky** and climbing stairs with seven steps or **ladders** with seven rungs. The Tree of Life is symbolized when seven notches are carved into a tree, post, or stone. For example, the Turko-Mongol birch post is carved with seven (or nine) notches and set standing symbolically at the center of the world for their shamanic **rituals** and ceremonies.

A partial, cross-cultural list of the Tree of Life follows:

Sima-Kade—Zulu, Africa

udesi burkhan—*Brugmansia aurea*, Siberia

Ygdrasil—Germanic, Europe

bai si—Thailand, Asia

wacah chan—Maya, Central America

yupa—India

bo—Babylonian

See also **dance**; **Middleworld**; **shamanic symbols**.

Heinze, R. I. *Shamans of the 20th Century*. New York: Irvington Publishers, Inc., 1991.

Matthews, John, et al. *The Celtic Shaman: A Handbook*. Rockport, MA: Element Books Ltd., 1991.

Perkins, J. *The World Is As You Dream It: Teachings from the Amazon and Andes*. Rochester, VT: Destiny Books, 1994.

Tree of the Shaman

The tree of the shaman is a reference to the **Tree of Life**, which figures prominently in the **initiation** of Indonesian **shamans**. Nepalese shamans are also initiated on the Tree of Life or, *da suwa* (life **trees**). The initiate is left blindfolded overnight on precarious platforms perched high in the life tree to seek **visions** relevant to his or her future as a shaman.

All trees are viewed by shamans as symbols of the Tree of Life. The Tree of Life is the ***axis mundi***, the connection between the seen (physical) and the unseen (spiritual) worlds, visualized as a tree in many **cultures** and **religions**. See also **Nepal**.

Eliade, Mircea, ed. *Ancient Religions*. New York: Citadel Press, 1950.

Trees

Trees are reflections of the **Tree of Life** in most shamanic **cultures**. The Tree of Life connects the physical realm with the spirit realm, and the **shaman** with the **helping spirits**. The trunk connects the **Middleworld** to the other worlds, allowing the shaman passage to the **Lowerworld** through the roots and to the **Upperworld** through the branches.

In many cultures a particular type of tree is considered the Tree of Life. For example, the birch for the **Tungus**, the **oak** for the Celts, the **sycamore fig** for ancient Egyptians, and the cedar for the peoples of the Pacific northwestern region of **North America**.

The **Celtic** people have a strong association with trees and the Tree of Life. By standing as if in the center of a tree, one stands in the center of the Celtic Universe and is connected to all things. The Celts also saw their life path in trees; the roots symbolizing the past, with their heritage and **ancestors**; the trunk symbolizing the present, and the expression of life force and creative spirit; and the branches symbolizing the future, with their goals and reaching toward the attainment of those goals.

In many cultures trees are looked to as **teachers** of transformation, reminding people of the cyclical nature of all life and the constancy of change. This is particularly true in areas populated by deciduous trees which completely change character with the seasons. Trees are also regarded as the **medicine** people of the plant kingdom. They teach humans how to work with the plants for **healing**.

Trickster

The trickster is a universal mythic figure who is the **embodiment** of the unexpected. As a **helping spirit**, the trickster teaches through surprise, reversal, or through humor at the student's expense. The trickster often shocks or humiliates people into seeing their attachments, habits, and outmoded sense of self.

The trickster is a powerful helping **spirit** who works with the flaws of **ordinary reality** to create good and bad luck. In some **cultures** there are both positive and negative tricksters. For example, in the **Dagara** tradition, Hyena is considered a negative trickster because he never fully uses the potential of Nature and it always backfires on him. Conversely, Spider and Rabbit are considered positive tricksters because they

use the powers of Nature fully in ways that benefit all living beings.

A partial list of tricksters includes: Coyote, Rabbit, and Raven in various regions on **North America**; Maui in the Polynesian Islands, Loki of the Germanic tribes, Krishna in Indian mythology, Hermes in Greek mythology, and *Mpungushe*, the jackal, *Anansi*, the spider, and *Kintu*, the hero-fool, in the **Zulu** tradition.

Arrien, Angeles. *The Four-fold Way: Walking the Paths of the Warrior, Teacher, Healer, and Visionary*. San Francisco: HarperCollins, 1993.

Tsentsak

Tsentsak are normally invisible **energy** projectiles that the **shamans** of various peoples throughout the Amazon region use to heal and sorcerers use to harm or kill. One aspect of the shaman's **power** is a thick, white **phlegm** kept in the upper part of the stomach, which is considered the most vital part of the body. This phlegm is called *yachay*, which is derived from a verb meaning "to know." Thus the phlegm and the *tsentsak* within it represent power as **knowledge**.

For these people, knowing how the world really is and how to manipulate its processes is power. The magical phlegm, the **helping spirits**, and the *tsentsak* are just three aspects or manifestations of the shaman's power. These manifestations of power can pass through many objects, substances, forms, and actions.

The shaman passes knowledge, power, and the *tsentsaks* on to an **apprentice** by regurgitating some of this phlegm and giving it to the apprentice to drink. The phlegm contains **spirit** helpers which the shaman or sorcerer can call upon for help. Similarly, the *tsentsak* can be used in **healing** or fired into a victim to cause harm. Inside the patient or victim, the dart is partly a material object and partly a living spirit being. See also **magical darts** and **Shuar**.

Vitebsky, Piers. *The Shaman*. London: Little, Brown and Company, 1995.

Tukyaini

The **energy intrusion** or **disease object** shot by a Hopi sorcerer into his or her victim. The *tukyaini*, or arrow, is sucked by the *tuuhikya* (**shaman**) from the patient's body during a **healing** ritual. A *tukyaini* is also called *powaka hoadta*, or "sorcerer his arrow." See also **disease**; **extraction**; **ritual**; **sucking shaman**.

Lyon, William S. *Encyclopedia of Native American Shamanism: Sacred Ceremonies of North America*. Santa Barbara, CA: ABC-CLIO, 1998.

Tunax

A general term for a shaman's **helping spirit** of any type in the **Alaskan** Arctic island regions, *tunaxat* (pl). *Kala* is the general term on the Alaskan Arctic mainland. A **shaman** who works with a *tunax* is called a *tunagalix* while a shaman who works with a *kala* is called a *kalalix*.

There are many types of spirits and many can change form. A *tunax* can be an **animal spirit**, a **dwarf** spirit, an elemental, a **giant**, or any form. The most important helping spirits are the animal spirits.

Lyon, William S. *Encyclopedia of Native American Shamanism: Sacred Ceremonies of North America*. Santa Barbara, CA: ABC-CLIO, 1998.

Tunghât

A *tunghât* is a shaman's **helping spirit** in the west **Alaskan** Arctic Coast, *tunghât* (pl). *Tunghalik*, or **shaman**, means one who controls or owns a *tunghât*. The *tunghât* usually takes a human form with a grotesque face but also has the ability to take the form of an animal or monster at will. Some forms are so terrifying that if the *tunghât* were to suddenly appear to an ordinary person, that person would eventually die of **soul loss**

induced by severe fright unless the shaman retrieves the lost **soul**.

The *tunghât* possess supernatural powers and some are more powerful than others. Shamans in this region endeavor to establish relationships with as many *tunghât* as possible to increase their **power**.

Lyon, William S. *Encyclopedia of Native American Shamanism: Sacred Ceremonies of North America*. Santa Barbara, CA: ABC-CLIO, 1998.

Tungralik

Tungralik is the term for *angakok*, or **shaman**, in the Yukon dialect of the South Alaska **Eskimo**. It means a person who possesses a *tungraniyak*, or **helping spirit**. There are many different types of helping spirits in this region of the world, however the most important are the **animal spirits**. A *tungralik* usually has several helping spirits, often of a variety of types.

Masks, or *kinaijoq*, are an essential tool in the *tungralik*'s practice. The mask is made to embody the shaman's helping spirit. When the shaman dons the mask and **dances** it in the dance **rituals**, the **spirit** enters his body and the shaman enters into a full **embodiment** trance. See also **Alaskan** and **trance**.

Lyon, William S. *Encyclopedia of Native American Shamanism: Sacred Ceremonies of North America*. Santa Barbara, CA: ABC-CLIO, 1998.

Tungus

People of northeastern **Siberia**. The Even and the Evenk formally comprise the Tungus, however they are found in many tribal groups.

Cosmology

Like other Siberians, the Tungus conceive of the spirit world composed of three realms: **Lowerworld**, **Middle-world**, and **Upperworld**. The Lowerworld appears similar to the earth, but exists outside of **time** and is populated

by the **souls** of the dead. The Middleworld also looks similar to **earth**, but it corresponds to real time and is populated by various types of spirits, human souls, and **animal spirits**, all of which have the ability to move out of time at will. The Upperworld exists outside of time and is the world of the stars, **sun**, **moon**, Buga (a Great Creator being who manifests as the **Sky**), and a few other spirits.

Soul

The **chanjan**, or human soul, is conceived of as a multiple soul. After death, the **chanjan** becomes an **omi**. In a natural and proper death process the **omi** are escorted by ancestral spirits to the land of the Omi-Souls, the source of the river of kinship of the Tungus. After this return to the source is complete, the **omi** may reincarnate in subsequent generations as a human or an animal. **Omi** may also choose not to reincarnate.

Some groups of the Tungus conceive of an aspect of the soul that carries the hereditary characteristics of the clan. This soul aspect represents what can be passed on genetically. All members of the same clan possess this clan soul within the complement of their multiple soul.

Class

The Tungus do not differentiate between “black” and “white” **shamans**. **Sacrifices** to the celestial gods can be made without the assistance of a shaman, however only the shaman can enter **trance** and bring back a patient’s soul. The rituals requiring a shaman are performed at night and the ceremonies of **prayer** and sacrifice are always performed in the day.

Many Tungus tribes recognize two classes of “great” shamans—the shaman and the clan shaman. The independent shaman acquires **power** and **training** directly from the spirit world. The clan shaman acquires power through heredity, usually transmitted from grandfather to grandson at the former’s death.

Among the **Manchu** the grandson succeeds only if there is no son, however in other tribes the powers must go to the grandson because the son is busy taking care of his father’s needs. A problem arises when there is no one in the shaman’s family to take on and maintain the relationship with the shaman’s **helping spirits**. In this case a stranger is called in so that the spirits will be cared for and will not pose a problem for the living.

Characteristics of Trance

The ecstatic trance state plays a great part in Tungus **shamanism**. Dancing, drumming, and **singing** are the methods most often employed to induce trance. The shaman begins his or her trance **induction** with a prayer to the helping spirits who are the source of his or her shamanic powers. In the prayer the shaman humbly speaks of his human weakness, but that the helping spirit is all-powerful and nothing can resist it. The shaman begins to **drum** and **dances** nine times around the **fire**, then addresses his helping spirit further in a **song**. For example the shaman cries out in song to the Great Thunderbird, “Stretch out thine iron wings (and come to me).”

The shaman continues to **sing**, drum, and dance. As the shaman begins to enter trance he or she becomes “light” and leaps high into the air in a **costume** that may weigh as much as sixty-five pounds. As the shaman moves more deeply into trance, the drum is handed to the assistant who drums while the shaman resumes dancing until he or she falls to the ground in full trance.

The ability to communicate with the audience as well as the spirits is a characteristic of the shamanism of the Tungus. While in **soul flight** the shaman answers questions from the audience and narrates every twist and turn of the adventure of his **journey** in the spirit world. This interaction between the shaman and the audience is essential. The audience sings, supporting the shaman’s trance and clarifying the way

home while the shaman's narration allows the audience to connect with the spirit realm through the story.

The Call

Traditionally the spirit of a **dead shaman** appears in a **dream** and instructs the dreamer to wake and succeed the shaman. That spirit often takes the dreamer's soul into the spirit world, initiating a spiritual crisis. The candidate wakes and manifests symptoms of an unexplained **illness** and/or temporary madness. During this period the candidate's soul is being challenged and tested in the spirit world. For those whose souls emerge sane from the terrifying death and rebirth at the core of this initiatory crisis, training will follow.

This period of training takes place largely in the spirit world. However, the candidate also learns techniques for attracting and dealing with the spirits and rituals for **offering** appropriate sacrifices from an initiated shaman who is recognized by the community. When the novice is ready he or she is initiated or consecrated in a ritual recognized as a shaman by the whole community.

In the majority of cases the spontaneous call from the spirit world occurs at maturity. However, when the first ecstatic experience occurs in childhood, the child is brought up as if he or she will become a shaman. However, if no subsequent ecstatic experience occurs, the clan will redirect the young person on another path.

There are times when a young candidate's behavior determines the need for training now and hastens the recognition by elder shamans and the community. When the candidate's response to the initial contact by spirit is strong and the candidate becomes possessed by his or her helping spirit, he or she may act as if mad. For example, Tungus candidates were reported to have run away into the mountains for seven to ten days, where they lived and fed their helping spirit.

When the candidate returns to the village dirty, bleeding, and disheveled,

he or she is still possessed. An elder shaman is called on to ask questions of the possessing spirit. The questions are designed to anger the spirit and push it to clarify the initiated shaman who is to offer the appropriate sacrifices to the spirits and prepare the **ceremony** of **initiation** and consecration so that the candidate can gain control of his or her trance state and learn to use it to perform as a shaman.

The Tungus must have a working relationship with several different types of spirits to be recognized as a shaman. The relationship with these spirits and the trance states necessary to work with them are mastered over time. Different types of spirits help the shaman to accomplish different things: protection, **divination**, curing, etc. Traditionally, there was a minimum number of spirits the shaman needed to have in his or her association to be considered a "real shaman."

To become a "great shaman" an individual shaman needed to be able to do more than acquire spirits and perform the rituals of past shamans. A great shaman was one who could innovate new methods with the assistance of new spirits. Great shamans were also able to learn to perform alien rituals with alien helping spirits from the shamans of neighboring tribes.

Need for the Shaman

The Tungus shaman is called on for curing, **soul retrieval**, **psychopomp**, conveying souls of sacrificed animals to the spirit world (psychopomp of animal souls), maintaining balance between the human and spirit world through ritual, and divination for locating game and the rituals necessary to assure abundant game.

The shaman is called when **disease**, misfortune, or sterility threaten the clan. The shaman must diagnose the cause of the disharmony and the remedy necessary to bring **healing** and balance to the situation. The shaman looks to ensure that the spiritual equilibrium of the entire society is maintained through

appropriate ritual and correct ceremonial sacrifice. The annual sacrifice offered by the shaman to his or her helping spirits is also an important spiritual event for the entire tribe.

Divination

Divination is often an act of “little shamanism” during which the shaman invokes the helping spirit within his or her body and asks the pertinent questions. Relative to a series of troubles, illnesses, or misfortunes the shaman divines the cause of the imbalance: spirits, souls of the dead remaining in the earthly realm, or ancestral souls, and the specific ritual and/or sacrifice necessary to restore balance. The shaman and the community then perform the ritual, during which the shaman often journeys into the spirit world to complete the resolution.

Healing

Healing rituals often require descent into the Lowerworld. These rituals are called *örgiski*, literally “in the direction of *örgi*” or the lower regions. An *örgiski* is performed to convey a sacrifice to the ancestor spirits or to the spirits in the **Land of the Dead**, to search for a lost soul and retrieve it for the patient, or to escort *omi* who are reluctant to leave the earthly realms into the Land of the Dead.

Long ago journeys to the Lowerworld were common, though full of risks and dangers. The shamans of that time are believed to have been more powerful than their contemporary counterparts. Today the ritual is not common; few shamans have the power to brave the dangers encountered in a descent into the Lowerworld.

Lowerworld Journey for Divination

The shaman's **power objects** are assembled in preparation for the *örgiski*. They include: a small raft the shaman will use to cross the sea, a lance for breaking through rocks, small objects representing two bears and two boars who help the shaman by holding up the boat in case of shipwreck or opening a path through the dense forest, four small fish

who swim ahead of the boat, an image of the shaman's helping spirit who will carry the sacrifice, and various instruments for **purification**.

On the evening of the *örgiski* the shaman puts on his or her costume, invoking a primary source of shaman power. The shaman then drums, **chants**, and invokes the spirits of Fire, Mother Earth, and the **Ancestors**, making a sacrificial offering to all three. The shaman **smudges** with a **cleansing** smoke and performs a divination. The drumstick is tossed in the air and the landing position is read to determine whether or not the spirits have accepted the sacrifices and joined the shaman in the ritual.

The second part of the *örgiski* begins with the central sacrifice, usually of a reindeer. The shaman's power objects are daubed with sacrificial **blood** and the meat is taken away and prepared for later. Poles are brought and laced with string that connects the poles to the power objects and to the platform outside. This cord is the “road” for the spirits to follow to enter the ritual. The shaman then begins drumming, singing, and dancing in earnest until he or she falls to the ground in trance.

The shaman's body is now inhabited by the helping spirit who will answer questions while his or her soul is journeying in the spirit world. If the shaman does not rise from the floor by the force of embodied spirit, he or she is sprinkled with blood three times. The spirit then speaks through the shaman in a high voice, answering the questions sung by two or three mediators.

When the shaman's soul returns from his or her task journeying in the spirit world everyone in the audience rejoices. This part of the ritual may last up to two hours. Everyone pauses for a few hours waiting for dawn at which time the *örgiski* is completed with a third ritual portion, similar to the first portion. The spirits who were called in the beginning are now thanked and the ritual **space** is closed.

Lowerworld Journey for Soul Retrieval

A soul retrieval healing also has three sections. In the first, the divination, the shaman must determine which aspect of the soul has left the body, why, and where it is now located in the spirit world. Then the *örgiski* begins as the shaman in costume drums, chants, and dances. The sacrifices are made to the *séven* (spirits) so that they will help the shaman's soul on its journey into the lowerworld. The shaman takes the spirit of the sacrificed animal into his or her body by drinking its blood and eating its flesh.

The shaman drums, chants, and dances and enters trance. Throughout the journey the shaman sings a narration of every step of the journey. The audience follows the journey step by step, reinforcing the shaman's power and trance through song. Having secured the lost soul, the shaman returns it, often in the form of a bird, to the patient's body. The last part of the ceremony, giving gratitude to the helping spirits, is performed one to three days later when the recovery of the patient is assured.

Some shamans also perform a **soul calling** healing ritual in the case of **soul loss**. In this form of soul retrieval the lost soul or souls are called back to the body through song. The traditional **words** of the song, its **rhythm**, and the shaman's gestures create a bridge into the spirit world that guides the soul back into the body of the patient.

Healings Without the Journey

The shaman does not always need to enter into a journeying trance to effect a cure. However, the shaman must always perform a divination to determine the true source of the trouble and the appropriate remedy. To identify the cause of the trouble, the shaman embodies his helping spirit to divine the necessary information.

If the cause of illness in an *omi* it must be driven away, offered a sacrifice to placate it, or, if it has entered the body of the patient, it must be exorcised

with the assistance of the helping spirits. When the cause of the illness is a different type of spirit, it may require that a small temple (*m'ao*) be built for it and sacrifices offered to it regularly in return for a cure.

Costume

In general a shaman's power and ability to cure was increased by acquiring helping spirits and creating new **paraphernalia** to house much of the acquired spirit power. Principal elements of the shaman's paraphernalia include the costume, cap or headdress, brass **mirror**, staff, drum, objects that serve as **placings (for spirits)**, and an assortment of other objects and musical instruments.

The costume can be a single element or the full complement of caftan, apron, skirt, trousers, and shoes. Two kinds of helping spirits dominate the costumes of shamans among the Tungus: the duck and reindeer, which includes iron reindeer antlers on the cap. *Kulin* or snakes hang from the back of the caftan in ribbons a foot wide and three feet long. In addition the shaman carries a staff that is carved at one end into the head of a horse. Both the snakes and the horse embody spirits that assist the shaman in his or her lowerworld journeys.

The costume is hung with iron objects, which the Tungus interpret as the moon, sun, and stars. The symbolism of these iron power objects is believed to have been borrowed from the **Yakut**. The snakes and the horse are believed to have been borrowed from the Buryat.

Paraphernalia

The shaman cannot perform without his or her paraphernalia, which embodies much of his or her acquired spirit power. Paraphernalia, though indispensable, was variable. The indispensable tools are the *toli*, a brass mirror with pendants used as a place to hold spirits, and the drum used to enter trance. At its most complex a shaman's

paraphernalia may include not only a variety of power objects, but several different costumes and several drums. See also **Buryat (Buriat)**; **death and dying**; **embodiment**; **multiple soul belief**; **the call**.

Eliade, Mircea. *Shamanism: Archaic Techniques of Ecstasy*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1964.

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———. *Shamans, Healers, and Medicine Men*. Boston: Shambhala Publications, 1992.

Shirokogorov, S. M. *Psychomental Complex of the Tungus*. Brooklyn, NY: AMS Press, Inc., 1980.

Vitebsky, Piers. *The Shaman*. London: Little, Brown and Company, 1995.

Tunraq

The *tunraq* is the most powerful class of **torngraq** or **helping spirit** among the Labrador **Eskimo**. The *turnaq* are believed to be able to locate game directly, not simply communicate to the **shaman** where the game is. Stories are told of master shamans who could send their *tunraq* into the open sea to kill a seal and bring it ashore.

Lyon, William S. *Encyclopedia of Native American Healing*. New York: W. W. Norton & Company, 1996.

Tupilak

Tupilak is the **Inuit** term for a **helping spirit** created by a **shaman** or sorcerer. Also *tupilek*, *tupitlaq*, **tornrak**, and *tupilat* (pl) in various **Eskimo** cultures. The *tupilak* is created from a part of an animal, like the head or a strip of skin, and then empowered with **spirit** by a shaman or sorcerer. A *tupilak* can be made from various parts of animals and assume the shape of any of its components once empowered. Some *tupilak* are carved from bone, tusk, or wood.

A shaman uses a *tupilak* like other helping spirits in **rituals** of **healing** or **divination**. A shaman's *tupilak* can be sent into the body of a patient to aid in drawing the **illness** from the body or sent into the future to gather information. When **sorcery** affects the patient, the shaman may wage battle directly with a sorcerer's *tupilak* though they are dangerous and hard to kill.

A sorcerer's *tupilak* is made from bones, **blood**, skin, sinew, or hair and often contains something taken from the intended victim. Particularly powerful *tupilak* are made with human bones taken from graves. The *tupilak* can be empowered and animated by spirit in many ways. Sorcerers commonly use ritual, breath, **song**, or suckled semen to give the *tupilak* life.

The *tupilak* does not always do the harm directly, but is used to set a malevolent end in motion. For example, an **Alaskan** Eskimo practitioner created a *tupilak* in the image of the intended victim and then drowned it. The victim was drowned in the next whaling season, dragged under **water** by a harpoon line.

It is possible, as with all hexing, for the *tupilak* to turn on its creator if mistakes are made in its creation or empowerment. Furthermore, if the sorcerer underestimates the **power** of the victim's spirit protection or personal protective **amulets** the *tupilak* will be repelled. It will return to the sorcerer to carry out the malevolence for which it was created on its creator. Sorcerers are particularly vulnerable to their own magic. See also **culture** and **ilisineq**.

Lyon, William S. *Encyclopedia of Native American Shamanism: Sacred Ceremonies of North America*. Santa Barbara, CA: ABC-CLIO, 1998.

Vitebsky, Piers. *The Shaman*. London: Little, Brown and Company, 1995.

Tutelary Spirits

Tutelary spirits are a type of **animal spirit** who represents the identity of the

shaman in the spirit world and who coordinate the efforts of the **helping spirits** if more than one is necessary for the **healing**. Some scholars designate the tutelary spirit as the shaman's **teacher** while the other animal spirits function as the shaman's helpers.

Animal spirits are helping spirits in animal form who are able to transcend the abilities of that animal in its ordinary existence, e.g., anacondas flying without wings or fish swimming through mountains. They express their **power** through their extraordinary abilities. Though common in the **shamanism** of peoples of the northern Eurasian continent, not all **cultures** recognize the role of the tutelary spirit.

Eliade, Mircea. *Shamanism: Archaic Techniques of Ecstasy*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1964.

Kalweit, Holger. *Shamans, Healers, and Medicine Men*. Boston: Shambhala Publications, 1992.

Tuuhikya

Hopi **shamans** who heal but do not belong to either Yayatü or Poswimkya, the two Hopi curing societies. *Tuuhikya* acquired **tupilak**, **power** from animal **helping spirits**, which enable them to enter **trance** for **visions** and **diagnosis** and to perform sucking and other forms of **healing** rituals. See also **Poswimkya Society**; **ritual**; **Yayatü Society**.

Lyon, William S. *Encyclopedia of Native American Shamanism: Sacred Ceremonies of North America*. Santa Barbara, CA: ABC-CLIO, 1998.

Tuuhisa

(Also: *duhisa*) The supernatural **power** received from a **helping spirit**, particularly an **animal spirit**. The Hopi differentiate between the power of *tuuhisa*, wielded by the *tuuhikya* (**shaman**), and the power of *powa*, wielded by the **priests** of Hopi ceremonial societies. This distinction is not based on the

nature or strength of the power, but on who is wielding it. *Tuuhisa* is neutral; it can be used to benevolent or malevolent ends.

Historically the Hopi came to devalue the **trance** states and **visions** of the *tuuhikya* healers. Though these shamans continued to be called upon frequently, they were no longer given the respect now paid the priests of the ceremonial societies who also had powers for **healing**.

Lyon, William S. *Encyclopedia of Native American Shamanism: Sacred Ceremonies of North America*. Santa Barbara, CA: ABC-CLIO, 1998.

Tuva

A small mountain and steppe republic lying north of Mongolia in the Russian Federation. The Tuvan people are known for having maintained their indigenous traditions of **shamanism** and **music** relatively intact until early in the 20th century. Rural Tuvans remain connected to Nature and the **spirits** of their land as their **ancestors** before them. They continue the traditions of maintaining awareness of and acting in harmony with the spirits.

In the mid-1900s shamanism was severely persecuted in the USSR. Many **shamans** were imprisoned while others who continued to practice in secret were stripped of their **costumes** and **drums**, essential tools in their work, by authorities who burnt them or by family members who hid them or turned them over to museums. In contrast, contemporary Tuvan shamans work publicly for the first time in decades. In the capitol city of Kyzyl, the Association of Tuvan Shamans has set up a clinic where shamans diagnose and heal the physical and mental illnesses of their clients.

Spirits of Place

The spirits of Nature are honored as a regular part of every day, particularly spirits of the land. **Offerings**, **songs**, and

music are given to mountain passes, forks in the road, burial sites, petroglyph sites, and sacred **caves**. The shaman honors the spirits of places as a matter of course to cultivate strong relationships, which the shaman can then draw on in her work. Through drumming the shaman amplifies the natural energies of these places which serve to stimulate the patient and the patient's **healing**.

Offerings

Typical Tuvan offerings include food, strips of cloth tied to **trees**, **tobacco**, money, and/or music. Music can be used by the shaman to convey greetings, apologies, gratitude, and to make special requests. Thus music is used as the **vehicle** for **prayer**.

Ritual

The *kamlanie* (shamanic ritual) is based on the understanding that while in **trance**, humans are able to connect with the spirit world through their senses. The primary sensory stimulation is auditory, invoked by music, song, chanting, the drum and other instruments. Directly related to the music is **dance** which accompanies the playing of the drum and stimulates kinetic body awareness. The shaman's eyes are covered to stimulate inner vision. Shamans ingest offerings to the spirits of food and vodka that stimulate inner taste. **Incense** is burned, usually *artysh* (juniper), to stimulate an inner sense of smell, which aids the shaman in tracking lost **souls**.

Central to the *kamlanie* is the shaman's chanting and drumming; the music's function is threefold. First the chanting and drumming create the bridge to the spirit world while simultaneously opening the awareness of all the participants to that bridge. The shaman uses the music to call specific **helping spirits** into the place of the **ritual** for overall protection and into relationship with the shaman specifically to help in the tasks to be accomplished in that *kamlanie*. Finally, the shaman used the

drumming in particular to convey them on their **journey** into the spirit world.

In the past the shaman narrated their entire journey and conversation with the spirits, providing a spontaneous story whose telling served to connect the participants with each stage of the healing. With skilled shamans the narration included a translation of both sides of the conversation with the spirits.

The shaman's narration during the *kamlanie* often involves the calls of wild or domestic animals and Nature **sounds** like rustling reeds or the winds across the steppe. The shaman's ability to utter these sounds was seen as evidence of the shaman's spirit transformation into that animal. Some sounds had cultural meaning in addition to being the voice of spirit. For example the sound of the wolves or owls was used to frighten, the magpie to flush out liars, the raven to curse an enemy, and **power** was expressed through the sound of the bull or the bear.

The Journey

Tuvan shamans work in trance states in which they are aware of sending their souls out of their bodies, generally considered "**soul flight**." However, where they go in that trance and the depth of the trance are determined by the **diagnosis** of the patient's need. The shaman may enter the spirit world alone or accompanied by helping spirits, they may fly up into the air or down into the **earth**, or they may send helping spirits out alone to execute the diagnosis.

Music

Tuvan people used music to connect with the spiritual and physical aspects of nature involved in the work and the relaxation of their day. Traditionally their music was a way of relating with Nature, a spiritual practice for conversing with the spirits of the place. Their music was spontaneous, rarely the same twice, and never intended for concerts or human entertainment. Today, the traditional links have been lost through disuse and misuse. A song

sung with nostalgia for a native place does not function in the same way as music that creates a bridge to that place, allowing the singer and those listening to converse with the spirits of that place.

Tuvans believe that the spirits of Nature produce their own sound world and that humans communicate with those spirits through that world. Shamans are particularly adept at receiving and interpreting Nature's sound world and in using sound to engage that world in healing endeavors. This two-way "conversation," expressed through shamanic music, poetry, and narration, is improvised and/or arises spontaneously from the specific **time**, place, and purpose. They are never repeated as with healing songs in other **cultures**.

The music improvised for healing is created by the shaman in response to and interaction with the subtle energies of the place, the spirits present, and the souls of the people present, including the shaman. Repetition or recordings of the music created in one **shamanic healing** session would not be effective in another healing session because it would not fit the new situation.

Tuvan shamans use music and sound for diagnosis and healing. Sound is also used as to bridge ordinary and **non-ordinary reality** in the *kamlanie* (shamanic ritual). In the *kamlanie* sound becomes a tunnel, a bridge, or wings to fly in the spirit world. The sound of the drum is the most powerful tool of all the sounds used by the shaman.

Chants

Shamans **sing** improvised, poetic prayer **chants**, or *algys*, while they are working. **Singing** *algys* is the means by which the shaman calls on and communicates with the helping spirits. They are fundamental to the shaman's work.

Singing

In the past shamans used three different kinds of overtone singing or "throat

singing" to converse with the spirits in this spirit **language**. In overtone singing the performer sings two or more pitches simultaneously. All three styles are believed to have been inspired by the sounds of Nature.

Khöömei style produces two pitches and was inspired by the sound of wind passing through the rocks and cliff faces. *Kargyraa* style produces three pitches and was inspired by the sound of a mother camel who has lost her young. *Sygyt* style produces a whistling sound whose source of inspiration is unknown. These three styles, along with the calls of indigenous animals, are aspects of the spirit language perceived by Tuvan shamans.

Instruments

The shaman uses music to gather and focus the spiritual **energy** found in Nature and to connect and communicate with specific helping spirits. Because music serves this vital role in Tuvan shamanism, various instruments are used by shamans, though not exclusively. Generally speaking, if a shaman is to use an instrument in their work, they are shown how to make (or where to find) that specific instrument. When made new, the instrument is not ready to play until it has been introduced to the spirits. The shaman then learns to play the instrument and the spirits direct the shaman in mastering the use of the instrument as part of the shaman's practice.

Drum

The shaman's drum, the *düngür*, is again becoming the most important bridge to the spirit world now that the use of the drum and shamanic practices are no longer persecuted. The drum is fondly referred to as the horse who conveys the shaman on her journey.

The shaman produces a broad range of dynamic overtones on the *düngür*, though the trance-inducing **rhythm** itself is steady and monotonous. The natural range of drumhead's overtones are enhanced by **metal** pieces hung on

the inside of the drum and off the back of the drumstick.

It is a traditional Siberian belief that the life of the drum and that of the shaman are inseparable. It is believed that if the drum were destroyed the shaman would die, and if the shaman were to die that the drumhead must be ritually slit, or killed. It is said that after a **shaman's death**, the shaman's drum was heard beating a farewell on its own. The drum, like **power objects** used by shamans the world over, contains energy (power) that only the shaman has cultivated—the ability to use responsibly. With the shaman gone it is safest for all concerned to release the energy back to the spirit world from whence it came.

The Temir-Khomus

The *temir-khomus* (jaw harp) was used in the past by Tuvan shamans in the *kamlanie*, though it is uncommon today. The different melodies and rhythms produced with this resonant instrument were used to call specific spirits, to heal specific parts of the body, and to communicate ideas.

Paraphernalia

The **mirror** is the first and most important tool for a Tuvan shaman to acquire and learn to use. The drum is the next and as the shaman's strength grows the costume will be acquired.

Shamans explain that the *küzüngü* (bronze mirror) is used in diagnosis to reflect a particular type of energy out into Nature. The shaman interprets this energy as it bounces back from the mountains and rocks. The *küzüngü* is a tool or power object that can be used in healing as well as diagnosis. Smaller mirrors are attached to the shaman's costume.

Costume

The Tuvan shaman's robe is characterized by the vast array of symbolic and ceremonial objects attached to it. The shaman also wears a **feather** headdress and often a veil that covers the eyes while the shaman is in trance. The shaman's costume is so covered with

small objects of metal, wood, bone, and leather that it functions as another musical instrument. Each of these objects, and many of fabric as well, are attached to the garment with the intention that they move as the shaman moves so she resonates with sound. For the trained shaman these sounds can provide additional information in diagnosis and healing.

Gender

It is probable that the first Tuvan shamans were women. However, today women are quite restricted in some parts of Tuvan and Khakass society. Female shamans function as do the male shamans, participating in rituals that are otherwise forbidden to ordinary women. Female shamans work with the same power objects, playing the drum and *temir-khomus* and wearing costumes covered with sound-makers. Some female shamans even **sing** *khöömei*, a skill normally reserved for men. See also **Siberia**.

Van Deusen, K., and T. White.
"Shamanism and Music in Tuva and Khakassia." *Shaman's Drum* 47
(Winter 1997–8): 21–29.

Twasa

Twasa is a **Zulu** apprentice who is in **training** to become a **sangoma** (**shaman**). The *twasa* has experienced **Ukutwasa**, a spontaneous call from the spirit world and been accepted by a *baba* (**teacher**). The training of the future *sangoma* involves both technique and personal development.

A *sangoma* works with the *Amadlozi*, or ancestral spirits, who are ever present. However an **altered state of consciousness** is usually necessary to communicate with them directly. The *twasa* must learn to enter the necessary altered states via drumming, dancing, chanting, fasting, and meditation.

In an altered state the *twasa* is able to merge his or her **soul** with the greater powers of the *Amadlozi* and the energies

of the unseen world. After merging, the *twasa* learns to work in that state to perform **divination**, **diagnosis**, and **healing** rituals for the community.

Training

The *sangoma's* training is a highly ordered, strictly regulated, process. A *twasa* must work his or her way up through twelve stages, or ranks. In each stage he or she learns to work with one of twelve "vessels" or types of spirits. Few succeed in mastering the twelfth and final stage.

The *twasa* learns the tribal and community history and mythology, as well as the esoteric skills necessary to perform divination and diagnosis. The *twasa's* apprenticeship also involves a strict regime of personal healing and **purification**. The discipline is very strict and total abstinence from sex is mandatory. Certain foods are also forbidden.

Divination

Each *twasa* must create his or her own *dingaka* set for divination. The original four *dingaka* pieces come from the bones of animals sacrificed for the feasts which mark the *twasa's* completion of an area of training. After the feast the *twasa* searches through the **fire** for an unbroken bone. The bones are treated ceremonially, cleaned, and carved with **sacred** symbols.

When the *twasa* has collected and decorated four *dingaka*, he or she can begin training in divination and diagnosis. The *twasa* learns to diagnose **illness**, witchcraft, **sorcery**, and the presence of malevolent spirits. Through the *dingaka* the *twasa* learns to communicate with his or her **ancestors** for guidance in conducting ceremonies, creating and leading healing **rituals**, retrieving lost soul parts, embodying spirits, exorcising *tokoloshe* (ghosts), counteracting *tagati* (hexes), controlling the **weather**, and foretelling the future.

A Typical Day in Training

The *twasa* rises before sunrise. He or she beats four liters of ground roots and

herbs to a froth in a clay pot. The mixture is consumed and regurgitated several times to cleanse the *twasa's* system physically and to open up the head spiritually. This **cleansing** will make the *twasa* more sensitive and his or her skills of divination sharper and more accurate.

The *twasa* washes in an ice-cold stream, regardless of season, and returns home with his or her pot, now filled with a second herbal mixture. The mixture is boiled first to show that the **helping spirits** are present. Then the *twasa* bathes his or her naked body in the steam of the boiling pot captured under a blanket. After submerging again in the stream, the *twasa* is ready to meet the *baba*.

A formal greeting of praise is offered to the *baba*. The *twasa* begins to purge inner struggles by confessing negative thoughts, longings, hubris, or doubt. The *baba* may assign extra duties, hard work, or periods of sustained dancing or drumming to assist the *twasa* in his or her inner purification. These personal assignments must be completed in addition to lessons, the normal chores for a tribal member of the same age and **gender**, and assisting the *baba* with patients.

The regime, restrictions, and responsibilities of the *twasa's* apprenticeship may go on for years. Successful completion of the apprenticeship is honored in the *ukukishwa* ceremony wherein the *twasa* is recognized in the community as a *sangoma*. See also **apprentice**; **chant**; **dingaka bones**; **sacrifice**.

Mutwa, Credo Vusa'mazulu. *Song of the Stars: The Lore of a Zulu Shaman*. Barrytown, NY: Station Hill Openings, 1996.

Two Spirit

Two Spirit, a Native American term, refers to **gender-variant** men and women. These men and women fulfill traditional social roles different from each other and from the traditional

gender roles of men and women. Two Spirit men and women are best understood as additional genders.

One type of Two Spirit male is the **berdache** (*berdach*). Gender studies scholars basically agree that the *berdache* expresses an alternative or intermediate gender, accepted by their societies as being distinct from both women and men. He is not necessarily a homosexual, transsexual, a transvestite, or a hermaphrodite. The *berdache* must complete **rituals, training, and initiation** ceremonies to be recognized in his alternate gender status.

Transformed and **soft shamans** are also Two Spirit men. These **shamans** must complete rituals, training, and initiation to be recognized as shamans in their communities. Two Spirit also refers to homosexual men. Two Spirit men expressed same-sex sexuality, sensuality, or eroticism, often involving long-term marriage to a traditionally masculine male.

The Two Spirit female is a woman who adopts a hunter-warrior role. Female gender-variance has a separate and distinct status of its own, distinct from the traditionally feminine woman and from the *berdache*. The Two Spirit roles of women relate to traditional masculine endeavors, like hunting and killing, not traditional feminine endeavors, like spiritual leadership and **healing**. Two Spirit women expressed

same-sex sexuality, sensuality, or eroticism, often involving marriage to a traditionally feminine woman.

Traditional American Indian **cultures** believes the highest power is the **Great Mystery**. It is natural then that they held mysteries **sacred**. Much of what they didn't understand, like the Two Spirits, was considered sacred. By incorporating the Two Spirit into their societies, they can successfully use the different skills, insights, and spiritual powers of these alternate genders.

These Native American cultures supported the belief that a person's Two Spirit nature is much more internal to the basic character of the individual than it is simply the result of socialization. They believed that gender roles have to do with more than simply conforming to morphological sex or standard sex roles. Two Spirit alternative- gender roles conform to the requirements of a custom into which their culture tells them they fit. This cultural institution confirms an acceptance and value for what Two Spirits are. See also **domain; gender-variant male; transformed shaman**.

Conner, Randy P. *Blossom of Bone: Reclaiming the Connections Between Homoeroticism and the Sacred*. San Francisco: Harper-Collins, 1993.

Williams, W. L. *The Spirit and the Flesh*. Boston: Beacon Press, 1992.

U

Udesi Burkhan

The birch is the Buryat **Tree of Life**. It is known as *udesi burkhan*, “the guardian of the door” to the **Upperworld**. The birch is also call *sita*, meaning “**ladder**,” and *geskigür* meaning “step.” The birch plays a central role in the **initiation** of the Buryat **shaman**. See also **Buryat (Buriat)**.

Eliade, Mircea. *Shamanism: Archaic Techniques of Ecstasy*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1964.

Udoyan

The feminine form of **shaman** in Yakut **language**. *Ojuna* is the masculine. See also **Yakut**.

Ukutwasa

A Zulu *sangoma* is called to his or her profession by ancestral **spirits**. This experience is *Ukutwasa*, which means coming out or emergence. *Ukutwasa* often comes in a **dream** and manifests as an unexplained **illness** of the mind and body. During this dream, animals come to the dreamer, usually four lions or leopards and sometimes crocodiles or serpents. The dreamer is pulled apart and devoured by the animals, as in the **dismemberment** dreams of the initiates of many different **cultures**.

The strange illness gradually progresses and remains untreatable by standard **medicine**, herbal remedies, or **sacrifices**. Characteristics of *Ukutwasa* illness include, but are not limited to, **visions**, both waking and sleeping, increased ability to see future events or

through physical objects, experiences of dismemberment, and a sense of the self (ego) shifting into something different.

When the individual recovers from *Ukutwasa* he or she is recognized as a *twasa* (apprentice) and begins **training** with a *baba* (**teacher**).

The **Zulu** believe that patterns of **dreaming** were laid down by our **Ancestors** in the beginning times. These dreams contain messages from the Ancestors that still affect the lives of humans today. Some of these dreams make us crazy and some make us wise. It is one of these ancient dreams that a person experiences when they experience *Ukutwasa*. See also **Africa; apprentice; sanusi; the call**.

Mutwa, Credo Vusa'mazulu. *Song of the Stars: The Lore of a Zulu Shaman*. Barrytown, NY: Station Hill Openings, 1996.

Umbanda

Umbanda is a contemporary, Brazil-born spiritist movement that incorporates beliefs and practices of a mixture of traditional African **rituals**, Catholic saints, European Spiritist teachings, and practices of the indigenous shamanic population. Umbanda's rapid growth in the late 20th century is attributed to a fertile socio-cultural context, **trance** and **possession** being very common in Brazil and Argentina, as well as the failure of the medical system and the Catholic church to meet the needs of the larger population.

Umbanda adepts, called *babaloo*, when drawing from the African traditions, or *máe de santo*, when drawing from the Brazilian traditions, use trance states to achieve direct contact with **spirit** entities. The **mediumship** trances are induced in a ritual context usually accompanied by polyrhythmic drumming, **singing**, hand clapping, and sometimes bell ringing. The mediums **dance** and spin and concentrate on having their spirit come. In private consultations the mediums enter trance

by quietly concentrating on their spirits coming.

Recognized trance states in the Umbanda movement are unconscious, semiconscious, and conscious, referring to the medium's ability to remember events while in trance. Participants consult the mediums on a wide range of issues affecting their lives, livelihood, and health. Individuals who decide to develop mediumship skills receive special **training**. However not all of these people will become adepts over time.

Umbanda appeals to Brazilians of African, indigenous, and European descent and is oriented toward the middle class. The consultation process with mediums is more useful for contemporary people living in a high rate of change than those found in the older spiritist **religions**. Over all, the main purpose of Umbanda traditions is to work for the greater good of all humanity—to practice charity, hope, and faith, and to heal spiritually, mentally, and physically. See also **Africa**.

Goodman, Felicitas D., J. H. Henney, and E. Pressel. *Trance, Healing, and Hallucination: Three Field Studies in Religious Experience*. New York: John Wiley & Sons, 1974.

Heinze, R. I. *Shamans of the 20th Century*. New York: Irvington Publishers, Inc., 1991.

Ungarinyin

Aboriginal people living around Walcott Inlet of North Kimberley in the north of western **Australia**. **Shamans** of this regions are call *banman* or *bainman*. The *banman's* **power**, or *miriru*, comes directly from Unggud, the dreamtime. When his training is complete the *banman* is believed to have the powers and abilities of Dreamtime heroes.

Initiation

A *banman* is said to be chosen by Unggud. The initiate has a **dream** that Unggur, the great serpent of the

Dreamtime, has killed him in a particular **water** place. After the boy's **initiation** into manhood, he is taken by a shaman **teacher** to that water place seen in his dream.

There Unggur, seen by teacher and student, rises out of the water (or the ground in some cases) with arms, hands, and a feathered crown. The initiate falls into **trance** and is taken by Unggur into subterranean **caves** where Unggur gives the initiate a new brain, fills his body with quartz **crystals**, and explains his future duties as a *banman*.

When the candidate wakes from his trance he is ready to begin training with his teacher. Instructions in controlling the gifts of power from Unggur and the skill of the craft continue for many months and often for several years. The new *banman* learns to see and understand things in the invisible world. He learns to see past and future events and events happening at a distance or in other worlds, to read other people's thoughts and recognize their secret worries, to move crystals from his body to cure illnesses with these magical stones, to send this *yayari* (**helping spirits**) from his body to gather information or to transform into that form and travel himself. Finally he must learn to enter trance at will and travel in the realms of the Dreamtime.

Power Displays

When the *banman's* training is complete he gives a public display of power. He and his teacher return to the water place of his initiation, this time with others of the community. They both dive in and rise to the surface riding on the back of Unggur. Spectators see only the two *banman* rising from the water, surrounded by huge waves stirred by the giant body of Unggur. Unggur then throws quartz crystals onto the land, which are gathered by the spectators and kept as cherished gifts from Unggur and living symbols of the Unggud. In this way the new *banman* establishes his power and prestige within the community.

Elkin, A. P. *Aboriginal Men of High Degree*. New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 1994.

Kalweit, Holger. *Shamans, Healers, and Medicine Men*. Boston: Shambhala Publications, 1992.

Unio Mystica

Unio mystica is the experience of feeling the ecstatic truth of being absolutely and totally inseparable from every other aspect of creation. It is the experience of union with the Divine.

In this experience the human identity expands to include the All. The individual experiences a shift of consciousness so that he or she is experientially aware of his or her true energetic connection to all things in the **Kosmos**.

This realization of Oneness with All Things is the result of a developmental and evolutionary process of growth and transcendence. It is the existential unity, or *sama-dhi* of Hindu practices, the enlightenment of Eastern practices, and the illumination of Western spiritual practices. It is also the result of the mastery of the **techniques of ecstasy** by the **shaman**. See also **ecstasy** and **evolution**.

Achterberg, J. "The Wounded Healer: Transformational Journeys in Modern Medicine." In G. Doore (Ed.), *Shaman's Path: Healing, Personal Growth and Empowerment*. Boston, MA: Shambhala Publications, 1988.

Peters, L. G. "Mystical Experience in Tamang Shamanism." *ReVision* 13, no. 2 (1990): 71–85.

Wilber, K. *A Brief History of Everything*. Boston: Shambhala Publications, Inc., 2001.

Upperworld

From a shamanic perspective anything and everything has, or is, **spirit**. The spirit aspect of everything, which is normally invisible, is experienced directly by the **shaman** through his or her

senses while in an ecstatic **altered state of consciousness**.

This invisible world, or **non-ordinary reality**, is experienced by the shamans of many different **cultures** to have three realms: the Upperworld, **Middleworld**, and **Lowerworld**. These realms are non-linear, with limitless **space** and without **time**.

The Upperworld is accessed from things that exist physically in **ordinary reality** that go up, like the branches of **trees**, mountaintops, cliffs, and rainbows, and travels upward on smoke from **incense** or a **fire**, as well as things seen in ecstatic visions, like **ladders** ascending into the **sky** or flying. The shaman's spirit engages one of these openings through the sky and travels upward until he or she reaches the intended level of the Upperworld.

Upperworld **journeys** are often particularly ecstatic, which means that the shaman is merged or connected to his or her helping spirit to gain access to the Upperworld. Once there, the shaman continues to journey through the Upperworld with his or her **helping spirits**.

The Upperworld is inhabited by helping spirits in humanoid form (gods and goddesses), some spirits of Nature or **elements**, some **power animals**, and formless spirits. The shaman enters this realm to retrieve information, helping spirits, and lost **souls**. The shaman works in a journeying **trance** state, which is often ecstatic, to maintain a presence in the Upperworld.

Harner, Michael J. *The Way of the Shaman*. San Francisco: Harper-Collins, 1990.

Urukáme

A **crystal** containing the **soul** of a deceased family member. The **mara'akame** (**Huichol** shaman) performs a **ritual** to capture the soul of the deceased and place it into a rock crystal so that it will remain present with the family. The *urukáme* lives in the family

shrine on the **altar** and is brought out to participate in all rituals.

Utugun

The feminine form of **shaman** in Altaic **language**. **Kam** is the masculine. See also **Altai**.

Uwishin

Uwishin, meaning “someone who knows all the secrets,” is the **Shuar** word for **shaman**. *Uwishin* are healers and sorcerers who work, to benevolent and malevolent ends, respectively, with medicinal plants, **tsentsak** (**magical darts**), and **spirit** powers accessed by drinking *natem* (*ayahuasca*). See also **sorcery**.

V

Vegetalista

Vegetalista is a Spanish word used to refer to **shamans** who work with plants for medicinal and hallucinogenic purposes. **Knowledge** of how to work with the plants and the necessary **icaros** (**songs**) to invoke their **power** to heal comes directly from the **spirits** of the plants. The real power of the plants to heal is in the *icaros*. This is demonstrated in the *vegetalista's* ability to cure **illness** with the correct *icaros* without ever administering the plant physically.

Vegetalistas are proficient in the use of a large variety of plants and preparations for medicinal purposes and they tend to specialize in a particular **plant hallucinogen** as their primary **teacher** and means of communication with the spirit realm. The most common *vegetalistas* are *ayahuasceros* who work with *ayahuasca*. Other specialists include: *tabaqueros* who work with **tobacco**, *toéros* who work with *Brugmansia*, *catahueros* who work with the resin of *catahua* (*Hura crepitans*), *paleros* who work with the bark of certain large **trees**, and *perfumeros* who work with fragrant plant essences.

During **training**, a master shaman protects the initiate from attack by sorcerers, malevolent spirits, and natural phenomena until the initiate learns to protect himself. For example, initiates learn to use **helping spirits**, *tingunas* (electromagnetic emanations), and *arkana* (defensive powers) to protect themselves from common attacks of **sorcery**, like *virotos* (**magical darts**), *marupa* (malevolent **power animals**), and *huaní* (the glass arrows shot from a magical bow).

The master shaman also facilitates the transmission of information from the spirit teacher during training. There are **diets**, meditations, and **taboos** the initiate must observe to create the conditions under which transmission is possible. The initiate learns to draw on the three great powers of the spirit world: the **sky**, forests, and underwater realms, for **healing** powers and guidance. In addition to the plants, the initiate must also master the *icaros* and the ability to work with magical **phlegm** and magical darts. See also *Brugmansia aurea*; **medicine**; **plant diets**.

Luna, Luis E., and P. Amaringo. *Ayahuasca Visions: The Religious Iconography of a Peruvian Shaman*. Berkeley, CA: North Atlantic Books, 1991.

Vehicle

A **trance** state "vehicle" is anything that alters human consciousness enough to support the entry into and stabilization of an altered state while remaining constant to allow the individual to find his or her way back to **ordinary consciousness** at the end of the trance.

Shamans use a variety of techniques to enter trance, which work by disrupting the stabilization of the baseline of the shaman's ordinary consciousness. These include the monotonous **rhythm** of **drums**, **rattles**, other percussion instruments, like click sticks or hollow logs, **singing**, chanting, a stringed bow, *digerido*, bells or Tibetan bowls, dancing, and ingesting **psychotropic plants**.

Ordinary consciousness is a relatively stable and habitual pattern. When the stabilization of that baseline state of consciousness is disrupted, a radical rerouting can occur. This allows a transition from the patterned state (ordinary consciousness) into an unpatterned, chaotic state. If re-patterning forces are able to establish a new pattern, an **altered state of consciousness** stabilizes. It is the ability to do just this, to control the destabilization and

restabilization of states of consciousness that makes the shaman a master of altered states.

When this process is well learned, the shaman is able to destabilize his or her baseline state of consciousness, get to the desired, discrete, altered state of consciousness, to stabilize that desired altered state, and to destabilize that desired altered state and return to his or her baseline state of consciousness. The intentional control of this entire process for a variety of altered states is mastery of trance. See also **chant**; **plant hallucinogens**; **sonic driving**.

Tart, Charles, T. "The Basic Nature of Altered States of Consciousness: A Systems Approach." *Journal of Transpersonal Psychology* 8, no. 1 (1976): 45–64.

Walsh, Roger. "Phenomenological Mapping: A Method for Describing and Comparing States of Consciousness." *Journal of Transpersonal Psychology* 27, no. 1 (1995): 25–56.

Viho

Viho is a hallucinogenic snuff used by the Tukano of the Colombian Amazon. The Tukano explain that *viho* was given to them by the Sun's daughter, who took it from her father's semen during his incestuous relations with her. See also **epená**; **plant hallucinogens**; **Semen of the Sun**.

Virola Snuff

Virola snuff is a hallucinogenic snuff used widely by the **payé** (**shaman**) and adult males of the Tukanoan and Witotan **language** families in western **Amazonia**. The snuff, or **epená**, is made from the inner bark of several species of *Virola*, a genus of the nutmeg family, which is native to the tropical forests of Central and **South America**. *Virola* snuff enables the **payé** to summon the *hekura*, the little men of the jungle, who enter the *payé*'s breast and give him the

powers to cure **illness**, combat **sorcery**, and see into the future. See also **plant hallucinogens**.

Vision

Visions are messages of wisdom and guidance from the spirit world. They are distinguished from imaginings, fantasy, and most sleeping **dreams**. Visions must come *to you*, not *out of you*.

Visions can come to an individual through any of the five senses as well as kinesthetically through the body. For example, one can hear a vision rather than see it. The defining factor is that the vision comes to the receiver who is aware of its non-ordinary origin from outside of the self.

True visions often require preparation, like meditation and **purification**, and **induction** through the use of one or more of the **sacred** trance technologies. These technologies include, but are not limited to, prolonged isolation, fasting, sleep deprivation, **prayer**, and physical exertion. It is usually necessary to take solitary **time** away from the ordinary life patterns of stimuli and response to empty the mind and make it a receptacle for true visions.

Visions are rarely literal and must be interpreted. The images of the vision come from the **symbolic language** of the receiver. Who the vision is for and what it means is not always apparent or easy to hear. The receiver may need the skills of a **shaman**, or other culturally designated interpreter, to help unfold the meaning of the images and to lay out a path forward based on the vision. The shaman may also interpret animal or dream **language** that occurs within visions.

There are images that come to a dreamer while semiconscious or asleep. These are special dreams but not visions. However, they are another means through which the spirit world communicates with the dreamer and, as such, they are interpreted with the care of visions. See also **dream incubation**; **trance**; **vision quest**.

Arrien, Angeles. *The Four-fold Way: Walking the Paths of the Warrior, Teacher, Healer, and Visionary*. San Francisco: HarperCollins, 1993.

Erdoes, Richard, and Archie Fire Lame Deer. *Gift of Power: The Life and Teachings of a Lakota Medicine Man*. Santa Fe, NM: Bear & Co., 1992.

Vision Pit

The vision pit is a grave-shaped hole dug for a form of **vision quest**. The pit enhances the already pronounced and frightening feeling of dying that precedes the connection with **spirit** that allows the **visions** to come.

Tobacco ties are used to mark the pit and flags marking the four directions are planted at the four corners. Then the quester crawls into the pit and is buried to the neck with the head covered or a tarp is spread over the pit and strewn with **earth** and grass. To pray for visions while buried alive inside the pit is the hardest way to quest. The quester sees, feels, and hears nothing. To stay like this for days, fasting and alone, takes great courage and a profound need for vision. See also *hanblecheya*.

Erdoes, Richard, and Archie Fire Lame Deer. *Gift of Power: The Life and Teachings of a Lakota Medicine Man*. Santa Fe, NM: Bear & Co., 1992.

Vision Quest

The vision quest is a solo **journey**, usually three to four days, into the wilderness to ask for **visions** from **spirit** of wisdom and guidance. Preparation involves a combination of fasting, **prayer**, meditation, **cleansing**, or **purification**. During the quest, the deliberate pursuit of visions is enhanced by the use of **sacred** trance technologies, including, but not limited to, prolonged chanting, praying, isolation, fasting, sleep deprivation, and performing **ritual**.

The vision quest is an archetypal spiritual activity found in many **cultures** and **religions**. There are as many forms for how to quest as there are cultures of people who need to quest for spiritual guidance. The **Inuit** of **Greenland** practiced vigorous vision fasts, retreating for weeks into the remote, icy wilderness. Biblical prophets fasted for revelation in the wilderness, desert, and on mountaintops. Ancient Celts fasted for three days uninterrupted inside **caves** or *sidhe*, **chamber mounds**, while questing for visions.

There are personal and social reasons for a person to seek **power** through vision questing. It can take years to prepare for a single vision quest, and the quests themselves involve personal **pain** and suffering. Even when every aspect of the quest is executed correctly, the visions do not necessarily come.

In **North America**, native peoples used the vision quest as a means to receive guidance for a variety of life issues. Every boy quested at least once, at **initiation**, for a vision to determine what kind of life he would lead in manhood. Traditionally, girls quested for their life path in equivalent, but different, rituals in the **moon** lodge.

Those who respect and understand the power of true visions also fear them. The vision can put you on a path you don't want to follow. For example visions may tell a man that it is his path to become **shaman** or **Two Spirit**, both lives demanding challenge and self-sacrifice.

Visions are distinguished from imaginings, fantasy, and most sleeping **dreams**. Visions must come *to you*, not *out of you*. Actually visions can come to an individual through any of the five senses, for example one can hear a vision rather than see it.

To receive a vision on a quest does not make one a shaman; it makes one human. However it is often on a quest that an individual will receive a vision that defines his or her path to become a shaman. The **training** and initiation of a

shaman is significantly more complex than a single vision quest.

Male and female shamans both use the vision quest to gain power and guidance for personal and professional issues. Usually the shaman reserves the vision quest for very hard **healings**, issues of life and death, **divinations** that will impact the whole community, or personal healing and guidance.

Vision quests can also be used as a part of the novice's training. For example, young Nepalese shamans were blindfolded and left overnight to seek visions on precarious platforms perched high in **trees** known as *da suwa*, or life trees.

Contemporary scholars explain that the isolation and solitude disrupt the routine patterns of **ordinary reality** and the expected social structures. The interruption can allow a return to simple human nature (the body) and the innate connection to sacred **knowledge** (the **soul**). Fasting and sleep deprivation then trigger physiological responses which induce ecstatic **altered states of consciousness**. Scholars suggest that the commitment, physical hardship, and ritual self-sacrifice involved in undertaking a vision quest may be vital to opening the connection with spirit and receiving visions of sacred knowledge.

Many shamanic traditions hold the belief that any solitary **time** that is spent in nature for purposes of reflection and guidance reawakens the individual to his or her own life purpose and to remembering the **original medicine** that is uniquely his or hers to offer to all creatures. See also **chant**; **Nepal**; **trance**.

Arrien, Angeles. *The Four-fold Way: Walking the Paths of the Warrior, Teacher, Healer, and Visionary*. San Francisco: HarperCollins, 1993.

Erdoes, Richard, and Archie Fire Lame Deer. *Gift of Power: The Life and Teachings of a Lakota Medicine Man*. Santa Fe, NM: Bear & Co., 1992.

Vital Soul

The vital soul is the aspect of the **soul** that sustains the physical body. It is the sensing soul that remains in the body.

Vodoun

(Also: voudun, voodoo) Vodoun is a spiritual practice of the people of Haiti and areas of **North America** and **South America** to which Haitian peoples have migrated. Vodoun, a word from the Fon people of Dahomey (now Benin) in West Africa, means "introspection" and "the unknown." The name implies a **journey** into the depths of the unknown in search of mystery or God. Vodoun presents a complex, metaphysical worldview distilled from profound religious ideas that have their roots in **Africa**.

Vodoun is a system of profound spiritual beliefs about the relationships between man, nature, and the invisible spiritual forces of the universe. It relates the Unknown to the known, finds the order in **chaos**, and renders the mysterious intelligible for people in their ordinary lives. Vodoun provides an essential bond for the community of people who practice it.

Participants in Vodoun are expected to embody a set of spiritual concepts that prescribe a way of life, a philosophy, and a code of **ethics** that regulate their communal behavior. For practitioners of Vodoun there is no separation between the **sacred** and the secular and thoughts, words, and deeds in one realm affect things in the other.

The Vodoun **priests** and priestesses are called **houngan** (male) and **mambo** (female). They function as the "**shamans**" of the Vodoun society. They practice a complex system of traditional **medicine** that is both physical and magical. The practice also involves a distinct **language**, **art**, **music**, and the participation in traditional Vodoun **rituals** and **ceremonies**.

The *loa* are "major forces of the Universe" given specific, anthropomorphic characteristics by the **culture**.

Vodoun has evolved into a practice that serves the *loa*, who are the major forces of the Universe expressed in anthropomorphic characteristics as they are seen by the Vodoun culture. They are the multiple expressions of God. There is a Supreme Force at the apex of the Vodoun pantheon. However, the Haitians interact only with the *loa* on a daily basis.

The *loa* are powerful and predictable. If offended or dishonored they can do great harm to humans. However, when served properly, they bring humans good fortune. The relationship between the humans and the *loa* is interdependent, each bringing to the other something they need and value.

The humans serve the *loa* through life and they give birth to them at death. In a ritual held one year and a day after death the **souls** of the deceased are placed in the inner sanctuary of the temple. Those ancestral souls become part of a vast pool of ancestral **energy** from which the *loa* emerge.

The Vodoun pantheon includes four hundred and one *loa*. Examples of the older and more central *loa* are Legba, **spirit** of communication between the realms; Guede, the **spirit of the dead**; Agwe, the spiritual sovereign of the sea; Ogoun, the spirit of fire, war, and metallurgical **elements**; and Erzulie, the spirit of Love.

The central ritual of the Vodoun practice is the **invocation** of and **possession** by the *loa*. In a ritual to induce this **embodiment** trance state the *mambo* or *houngan* prepares the ritual space within the temple. The **altar** is prepared, candles are lit, and the *vévé*, the symbol of the *loa* being invoked, is carefully traced into the earthen floor of the temple. A series of **libations** are left as **offerings**.

The *hounsis*, or initiates, are brought in, moving counter-clockwise in a **dance** around the centerpost, or *poteau mitan*. The *houngan* or *mambo* conducting the ritual recites the mysteries of an ancient tradition accompanied by a sacred **rattle**. Then the **drums** begin.

First the *cata*, the smallest of the drums, followed by the rolling **rhythm** of the middle drums, and finally the *maman*, the largest of the drums joins in the complex rhythms. The *mambo* adds her voice to the invocation of the drums.

The *ogan* (iron shaft), *assons* (gourd rattles), and bells are played with the drums. The *ogan* functions as a clapper, the rhythms of which can be heard above the drums. The *ogan* is always played by a woman. The *assons* are used to call in the energies of the **east** and the magical powers of the **ancestor** stars. The bells are used to call in the energies of the **West** and the magical powers of the stars of the future.

The *hounsis* begin to dance with purpose and resolution. They dance with the intention of being possessed by the *loa*, "to be mounted and ridden by the Divine Horseman." After thirty to forty minutes of drumming and dancing, the *loa* arrives. The rhythm changes and dancers begin to convulse with the beginnings of their dance of possession. The *mambo* sprays the dancer with libations of **water** and rum for the *loa* and directs the *loa* with the **sound** of her rattle.

The Vodoun temple is the home of the giant celestial serpent who came from the stars. The Serpent possesses all the secrets of the magic language. That language is magnified by the sacred music created in Vodoun rituals and ceremonies. See also **energy** and **trance**.

Davis, Wade. *Shadows in the Sun: Travels to Landscapes of Spirit and Desire*. Covelo, CA: Island Press, 1998.

Heinze, R. I. *Shamans of the 20th Century*. New York: Irvington Publishers, Inc., 1991.

Volva

Female Norse **shamans** or **seers** who performed the **seidr**, a **divination** ritual involving a deep **trance** state induced by the ecstatic **singing** of a chorus. The *seidr* was originally the **art** of the

goddess *Freyja* and was associated with the feminine, death, and the cycles of Nature. Prior to the spread of monotheistic **religions** across Eurasia, Nordic **shamanism** was practiced primarily by the *volvas*.

As Norse traditions evolved the older, fertility-based deities were known as the *Vanir* and the younger, warrior-based deities were known as the *Aesir*. The shamanic, trance-based practices were linked to the *Vanir* and a special **energy**, *ergi*. *Ergi* was derived from the transformation of sexual energy through the singing of the chorus. Men

and male gods could not participate in the *seidr* because of the special **power**, *ergi*, was believed to be linked to gender variance, particularly in men. The warrior-based **culture** feared that to experience *ergi* was shameful. See also **gender variant** and **ritual**.

Hoppál, M., and O. J. von Sadovsky. *Shamanism: Past and Present (Vol. 1 & 2)*. Fullerton, CA: International Society for Trans-Oceanic Research, 1989.

Høst, A. *Learning to Ride the Waves*. København: Scandinavian Center for Shamanic Studies, 1991.

W

Wabeno

(Also *wabánowûk*, *wábano*) *Wabeno* is a class of **Algonquian** shamans, both male and female, who received their **power** from *wapanānā*, the Morningstar, via **dreams**. These **shamans** were renowned as the best **clairvoyants** or **seers** across a vast expanse of **North America**. They were also known for their public **power displays** of **mastery of fire**. The *wabeno* chewed fire **medicine** and sprayed it on their arms and hands enabling them to handle fire without harm.

Wapanānā gave the *wabeno* an understanding of and ability to direct the **manitou** force inherent in sexual **energy**. In their **initiation** rituals and ceremonials the *wabeno* danced naked, channeling this vital **healing** force through their bodies. An aspect of the *wabeno* **training** was learning to release erotic energies for healing from their **trance** states.

The *wabeno* ceremonials are usually performed as a group, men and women together, using **drums** and **rattles** constructed particularly for the percussive **rhythms** of trance **induction**. In many respects the development of the *wabeno* shaman paralleled the formation of the **Midewiwin Society**. See also **dance** and **ritual**.

Grim, John A. *The Shaman*. Norman, OK: University of Oklahoma Press, 1988.

Lyon, William S. *Encyclopedia of Native American Shamanism: Sacred Ceremonies of North America*. Santa Barbara, CA: ABC-CLIO, 1998.

Wissler, C. *The American Indian*. New York: Oxford University Press, 1938.

Wacah Chan

The Mayan **Tree of Life**. *Wacah chan* coexists within and connects three realms of the Mayan world. The branches of *wacah chan* reach into the highest layers of the **Upperworld** and the roots touch the deepest layer of *Xibalba*, the **Lowerworld**, providing a means by which the **shaman** can travel to these worlds. *Wacah chan* is represented by the color blue-green and is associated with specific **birds**, gods, and **rituals**.

Trees, in general, were essential to **Maya** life, providing food, **medicines**, dyes, paper stuffs, materials for homes and tools, and their ambient living environment. The *ceiba* is the Maya's most **sacred** tree. The great *ceiba* often grow at the entrances to **caves**, marking this portal in the natural world as the *wacah chan* marks the portal in the spirit world.

Wacah chan is the porthole through which the beings of one world accessed another. The **souls** of the dead fall down *wacah chan* to *Xibalba*. Her trunk provides the path for the **sun**, **moon**, stars, and planets on their daily **journeys**.

The *wacah chan* could be materialized through ritual anywhere in the physical or spiritual landscape. Specifically, the *wacah chan* was created within the shaman and the **ahau state shaman** in their ritual performances. In ecstatic **trance** states the shaman becomes the living representation of the central axis that connects all realms. See also **ancient Maya**.

Hammond, N. *Ancient Maya Civilization*. New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 1982.

Schele, Linda, and David Freidel. *A Forest of Kings: The Untold Story of the Ancient Maya*. New York: William Morrow, 1990.

Wakan Tanka

The source of all **healing** power for the **Lakota**. *Wakan tanka* translates literally

to “great mysterious one.” The term formerly referred to the Thunderbeings and now is more closely translated as the **power** of the universe or the **Great Mystery**.

Something that is *wakan* is holy or **sacred**. A **shaman** or medicine person is a *wakan* person. See also **medicine man**.

Lyon, William S. *Encyclopedia of Native American Healing*. New York: W. W. Norton & Company, 1996.

Waking Dreams

Waking dreams are dream-like, **altered state of consciousness** experiences that occur while the “dreamer” is awake. Waking dreams are commonly called **visions**. They may come on spontaneously, without provocation or they may be induced using a physical set up, like a **vision quest**, or by ingesting the milder **plant hallucinogens**.

Like sleeping **dreams**, waking dreams are recognized as either big dreams that contain a message for the community or little dreams that contain a message for the individual who has the vision. Waking dreams are interpreted as gifts from **spirit**, either the spirit of the dreamer, the dreamer’s **helping spirits**, or from Spirit in the greatest sense.

Warajun

The **Wurunjerri** word for **soul**. The *warajun* is the aspect of the soul that travels in the **dreamtime** outside of the limits of **space** and **time**. See also **Australia**.

Water

Water, one of the elemental powers, can be used for **healing** in its physical form and called on by the **shaman** energetically (as a **helping spirit**) in the invisible world during his or her **journeys**. Water is considered life-inducing; it is the Source-of-all-things. The theme that all life arose out of the primal waters of

creation is woven through the creation **myths** of almost every culture. Water purifies and regenerates, heals, and restores. The role of water in **shamanic healing** rituals is to provide the **energy** of **purification**, **cleansing**, restoration, or reconciliation. Water may be used in healing, for example, as a **libation** (offering) or to cleanse the shaman or patient. The shamans of many **cultures** use the energy of water directly from specific sites by conducting their healings or **initiations** near wells, springs, pools, waterfalls, the sea, or other manifestations of water where there are special energies to draw on. Shamans also immerse themselves in **sacred** pools or falls to cleanse themselves in the regular maintenance and restoration of their own energy.

The **spirit** of water is used by shamans in many different ways in their journeys to facilitate the healing of the patient. For example, water can be used to restore or regenerate lost **souls** prior to returning them to the patient. In other healing processes, the shaman may need to guide the patient’s soul on a journey of return to the Source so that the soul can remember where it came from and reconnect with its life’s purpose. Water is so deeply essential to human life that it arises in a myriad of different ways for the shaman to use in healing and restoration of others.

The role of the water is defined specifically culture by culture. For example the **Dagara** live in a part of West Africa where there are two seasons each year: a wet season and a dry season. The Dagara use the energy of water in **rituals** for peace, focus, and reconciliation. In contrast, the native peoples of **Amazonia** who live in a land of rivers and rain forest see water as a direct connection back through their **ancestors** to the **First People**. They see as enormous snakes the vast network of rivers that undulate through the rain forest. With their tails at the Source and heads open at the river’s mouth, the rivers (literal home of the anaconda) are symbolic of the celestial anaconda who

brought the first people, a man and a woman, from the Milky Way in a canoe with the yuca, **Coca**, and yajé (sacred **plant hallucinogen**).

Wells are held particularly sacred as places of healing and transformation. For the shaman they are a direct opening to the **Lowerworld**, providing a connection to all other realms of the invisible world. The well is also a direct connection to wisdom and the Source-of-all-things. Wells are held sacred for a third and practical reason; they play an essential role in the prosperity of the land. When the well, or spirit of the well, is abused or treated with disrespect, the well runs dry and the land, the crops, and all of the people suffer.

Shamans from around the world believe springs, rivers, lakes, wells, and the sea flow ultimately from the Source and thus bring messages from spirit up from the Lowerworld. For example, **Celtic** shamans of Europe and the British Isles believed that the water itself was wise, in part because of its beginnings at the Source and, in part, because of the **knowledge** gained by moving through the many transformations of form and reconciliation of opposites necessary for water to complete its cycle from evaporation at sea to its ultimate return. See also **Africa**.

Cowan, Tom. *Fire in the Head: Shamanism and the Celtic Spirit*. San Francisco: HarperCollins, 1993.

Schultes, R. E., and R. F. Raffauf. *Vine of the Soul: Medicine Men, Their Plants and Rituals in the Colombian Amazonia*. Santa Fe, NM: Synergetic Press, 2004.

Wayfinding

The Polynesian/Hawaiian art of navigation, used to sail vast distances across the Pacific Ocean, often spending weeks in open seas. The art of wayfinding is based on the practitioner's ability to become One with the stars, **moon**, **sun**, ocean, and its waves. Wayfinding is a specific application of the esoteric art of

journeying and **shapeshifting**. See also **Hawaii**; **journey**; **kahuna**.

Weather

Weather can be used as a source of **power** for **shamans**, and in this way weather is a **helping spirit**. Weather can also be the thing influenced by the actions of the shaman. Weather can be the shaman's means or his or her end.

Shamans derive a great deal of intrinsic power from an intimate relationship with the natural world. Much of this is achieved through a powerful association with the **elements**. The interplay of the elements gives us weather. Once a weather pattern is formed, it can be used like the elements as a source of power for the shaman. For example, shamans can call on the power of various weather patterns in their **ritual** work. Lightning and wind can be used for instantaneous change or rain can be called on for **cleansing** or rejuvenation.

Shamans are also called upon to change the weather. In the past the health of crops was a common reason to ask for more or less rain. Today the request may come to assure good weather for a sporting event, instead of the concern for crops. In Malaysia, an eyewitness reported that, after the shaman "tied" the rain with a knot in a kerchief, the rain fell around the field, but not on the spectators or on the football game they were watching.

Matthews, John, et al. *The Celtic Shaman: A Handbook*. Rockport, MA: Element Books Ltd., 1991.

Vitebsky, Piers. *The Shaman*. London: Little, Brown and Company, 1995.

Weather Shamans

Shamans with the capacity to influence weather, acting upon the elements in various ways. Pacific Northwest Coastal shamans, for example, will be given the task to stop rain, while **medicine societies** in the Southwestern region are called upon to

make rain. A weather shaman is sometimes a specialist. Shamans with the **power** to influence the weather are able to either disperse or call up clouds, rains, storms, or hurricanes, and to create and direct high winds to do things like confuse the enemy in battle.

Lyon, William S. *Encyclopedia of Native American Shamanism: Sacred Ceremonies of North America*. Santa Barbara, CA: ABC-CLIO, 1998.

West

The west is a directional **energy** used by **shamans** in their **ritual** work and the creation of **sacred space** within ordinary **space**. The west is one of six directional energies (**east**, **south**, west, **north**, above, and below) which together define the location of the seventh point, the center. Shamans must remain aware of their center at all times to keep from becoming lost while traveling in the boundless and ever-changing realms of **non-ordinary reality**.

Each of the directions is associated with an element, season, time of day, **color**, animal, deity, etc. These associations show both consistency and variation across **cultures**. The energy of the west is tidal, it ebbs and flows. For many cultures, though not all, the element associated with the west is **water**, the season is autumn, the time is sunset, the **life cycle** passage is the adult who faces fears, the **power** is wisdom, and the **journey** is one of introspection and inner vision, leading to letting go, death, rebirth, and harvest.

Wicasa Wakan

A **shaman** or **sacred** person in the Dakota language. **Wochangi** from all living things flows into the *wicasa wakan* all the time and something equally mysterious and powerful flows from the *wicasa wakan*.

Grim, John A. *The Shaman*. Norman, OK: University of Oklahoma Press, 1988.

Wi-Kovat

The *berdache* (*berdach*) of the Pima people of the North American southwest. Pima mythology does not suggest the wisdom in accepting and valuing gender variance in people. Pima mythology blames gender variance in Pima men on witchcraft practiced by their Papago neighbors, who do respect the *berdache*. The Pima, unlike their neighbors, do not respect their *wi-kovat*, and the term, which means "like a girl," is derogatory. See also **gender variant**.

Kalweit, Holger. *Shamans, Healers, and Medicine Men*. Boston: Shambhala Publications, 1992.

Wikwajigewinini

The *wikwajigewinini* is the **Ojibwa** sucking shaman, a **shaman** who heals by sucking **disease** causing **energy intrusions** from the patient's body. The *wikwajigewinini* works in an **embodiment** trance state with a hollow bone tube (approximately 3 inches in length and 3/4 of an inch in diameter) and a pan or other means of disposal for the **disease object**.

During a typical *wikwajigewinini* **healing** ritual the shaman prays to his **helping spirits** and calls them into his body, entering an embodiment **trance** facilitated by drumming and **singing**. He swallows a tube and regurgitates it into his mouth where he holds it while sucking. The *wikwajigewinini* kneels over the patient, locates the energy intrusion in the body, and, placing his lips on the body, sucks. After repeated sucking the disease object is sucked into the tube and is spit into a shallow dish along with the tube.

The healing **ritual** may need to be repeated to remove the entire intrusion. A stronger **spirit** may be called into the shaman's body to assure success in the subsequent sessions. Variations in the specifics of form do occur, for example disposing of the disease object in the **fire** instead of a bowl or pan and

taking it outside. However the functional steps of the process remain consistent. See also **sucking shaman**.

Lyon, William S. *Encyclopedia of Native American Shamanism: Sacred Ceremonies of North America*. Santa Barbara, CA: ABC-CLIO, 1998.

Windigokan

(Also *wetigokanûk* [Plains Cree], *bûngi* [Plains Ojibwa]) The Cannibal Dancers **healing** society among the **Ojibwa**. The *windigokan* dancer/healers were called on to heal the sick by exorcising the demons of **disease**, when the **diagnosis** determined that the **illness** was caused by "disease demons." The **costumes** of this society consisted of clothing from rags and a grotesquely painted mask with a gigantic nose, much like the **masks** of the False Face dancer/healers of the **Iroquois**.

Members of this society were men who had had a significant **dream** of a *päguk*, a skeleton **spirit**. When they performed their healing work they used inverted speech, saying the opposite of what they meant. As a result they are referred to as "clowns," much like the *heyóka* of the **Lakota**.

The *windigokan* dancer/healers go to the home of the patient where they **dance** in full costume and masks, pounding their **rattles** on the ground, **singing**, and whistling. A primary function of the dance is to frighten the disease demons. To this end the dancers approach the patient looking menacing, and run back, again and again in all manner of gymnastics, fierce antics, and grotesque actions. See also **False Face Society**.

Lyon, William S. *Encyclopedia of Native American Shamanism: Sacred Ceremonies of North America*. Santa Barbara, CA: ABC-CLIO, 1998.

Winkte

A **gender-variant** Lakota male. The *winkte* is a *berdach* (*berdach*), though

some specialized in **healing** mental and physical **illness**. More often they specialized in preparations of the dead and their funerary **rituals**. Many *winkte* were given powerful healing **songs** to aid in childbirth.

The **Lakota** explain that the *winkte* form a third group, different from either men or women. Their unique existence is **sacred**, a creation of *wakan tanka* like everything else. For the Lakota a person is what nature or his **dreams** make him. Traditionally, people are accepted for what they are, what they are guided to be, and encouraged to develop and share their **original medicine**. In his uniqueness the *winkte* is given certain unique powers that must be shared.

Young men who have a **vision** of Double Woman, White Buffalo Calf Woman, or the White Buffalo Calf Pipe during their **vision quest** are presented with the tools of the feminine gender. Young men who accept these tools are accepting the role of the *winkte* (*win* meaning "woman" and *kte* meaning "would become").

A young boy who has a dream or vision of an Ancestral *winkte* is potentially being called to become a *winkte*. At about twelve the parents of such a boy take him to a ritual designed to communicate with the Ancestral *winkte*. These **spirits** have the **power** to verify whether the boy's gender-variant inclinations are a phase or a calling. If the proper vision takes place during the ritual, one involving communication with the Ancestral *winkte*, then the boy is recognized as a *winkte* and he is raised appropriately.

The Moon Being is also a common **helping spirit** to appear in the visions of boys whose path it is to become a *winkte*. Though the specifics of these visions vary, the pattern persists. The Moon Being usually appears with a man's bow and arrow in one hand and a woman's tool in the other. The boy must choose between them in his vision. Through this type of vision the boy's role as *winkte* and the high status of

being instructed directly by the Moon Being are recognized.

Many *winkte* are not permitted by the spirits to be married and some are. This varies from one person to another. Some *winkte* marry men and others marry women, have children, and still fulfill the *winkte* role. For most *winkte* the role makes sex with a woman or another *winkte* inappropriate. A *winkte* must define his own path, like all other Lakota, as they are guided by *wakan tanka*. See also **gender-variant male** and **transformed shamans**.

Conner, Randy P. *Blossom of Bone: Reclaiming the Connections Between Homoeroticism and the Sacred*. San Francisco: Harper-Collins, 1993.

Williams, W. L. *The Spirit and the Flesh*. Boston: Beacon Press, 1992.

Wintun

The Wintun were once a vital and flourishing people of the northern **California region** of **North America**. The Wintun nation occupied a territory from roughly Mount Shasta southward to what is now the San Francisco Bay area and from the Sacramento River to the Pacific Ocean. In 1870 it is estimated that the Wintun numbered in the 12,000s. After one hundred years of racial violence, white man's epidemic **diseases**, poverty, relocation, and intermarriage, the Wintun population was no more than 1,165.

Traditionally the Wintun have five kinds of "doctors" who all work in **trance** states. The dreamers and singers possessed the **power** of clairvoyance, but not of curing. Tracer doctors were able to locate lost objects, people, or **souls**. **Healing** doctors invoked trance states, diagnosed illnesses, prescribed remedies, and possessed the power to cure through these means. The sucking doctor was traditionally the most powerful, possessing all the powers of the others with the addition of the power to cure by sucking **extraction**,

involving the removal of **pains**, or energetic intrusions.

Traditionally, Wintun **shamans** were initiated in the *lahatconos*, an elaborate communal, night-long **dance** ritual, though that did not exclude those initiated in spontaneous individual ecstatic experiences. Either way, after this initial encounter with a helping **spirit** elder shamans care for the candidate, **singing** to empower, administering **medicines**, and performing necessary healings and extractions. When the novice had resolved this initial ecstatic experience, elder shamans take the novice to a *sauel*, a **sacred** place to pray, purify the body, and acquire power.

The **helping spirits** then teach healing skills, techniques, and **songs**. As the novice cultivates his or her power and skills, the spirits and the helping spirits of the elder shamans must find the novice acceptable. Even so, the novice will not begin practicing for many years. The novice continues to **sing** the healing and **power songs**, visit *sauel* to pray and purify, and to enter trance states to work with and learn from the helping spirits.

Helping Spirits

Wintun helping spirits do not have form. They may be *yapaitu*, spiritual forces residing in sacred places or celestial bodies, the spirits of animals, or *lehs*, the souls of departed relatives or people. The shaman continues to acquire power throughout his or her lifetime because each spirit is endowed with its own personality and usefulness. Helping spirits are acquired through doctoring and the appropriate **prayers** and **sacrifices** at places of power.

Wintun shamans may smoke **tobacco** to invoke the helping spirits. When the spirits come to the shaman the audience hears a whizzing or whistling noise. The shaman then feels a hotness overcome the body as the spirits enter and the shaman moves into trance. The same spirits do not always come and if one leaves, another will come. Four or five helping spirits was considered a large number.

While entranced Wintun shamans frequently deliver prophetic speech, *Yupas* too speak from trance. *Yupa* distinguishes the shaman's **altered state of consciousness** during **rituals** from his or her ordinary state of consciousness. Often the shaman speaks in a secret **language** of spirit in which one word can mean many things. The shaman's assistant or interpreter knows who the spirit is that speaks through the shaman and interprets the spirit's message.

In the past shamans would find things by singing and extract things by sucking. In the singing, the spirit in the doctor sees the intrusion and shows the doctor where to suck. Today doctors sing more, when in the past they went into deeper trance and sucked more. It is harder and less successful to pull a poison out with the hand. The **illness** just needs sucking.

Training

Wintun doctors undergo months to years of **training** depending of the type of doctor they are called to be and the power of their helping spirits. Training comes in **dreams**, trance states, and during ritual experiences with elder shamans. The shaman must learn songs, techniques, and mastery of trance. Novices may go to elder shamans for a "singing" to strengthen them. The Wintun believe that in order to keep a spirit, the shaman must take care of himself. Shamans observe food and **water** taboos, some traditional and some imposed by particular helping spirits.

Gender

The training of male and female shamans differs in areas where the genders have different responsibilities. This is an issue of balance and honoring unique roles, not one of separation. The Wintun believe that each gender has a unique relationship to creation. Therefore there are teachings for men and teachings for women to assure that both relationships are fully realized for the balanced good of the people.

Healing Rituals

Wintun shamans perform disease-object extraction by *winina* (sucking) or by *sehmin* (massage) or both. The *winina* is the most common and successful healing method. Generally described, the shaman "scans" the body with hands and **intuition** to find the areas containing energetic intrusions. A bone tube (femur bone of an adult eagle) is placed over the area with one hand while the **rattle** (turtle shell) is shaken vigorously near the area with the other. The disease-causing intrusion, or illness, is sucked from the body into the tube and then spit into a container of some kind.

The *lehstconos*, also an extraction healing, requires more power than the *winina*. Only the most powerful shamans can perform the lehstconos, which requires **mastery of fires** to successfully perform this healing ritual of **exorcism** and extraction of **energy intrusions**.

The *ehldilna* is considered the most difficult healing **ritual**. It is used only in dire cases of **soul loss**, when the patient's *lehs*, soul, has left the body because the illness has brought the patient so near death or because the *lehs* has been stolen by a malevolent spirit. The shaman's spirits must go in search of the soul and retrieve it or the patient will die.

Causes of Illness

The most common cause of illness is the intrusion of a *dokos*, or pain, into the body of the patient, usually as a result of **sorcery**. With the aid of spirit, shamans are able to "see with spirit eyes" and see the *dokos* in the patient's body as if the body were transparent. If the shaman's spirit is stronger than the sorcerer's spirit then the shaman will be successful in drawing the *dokos* out, usually by sucking or cupping.

The other two traditional causes of disease were spirit **possession**, thought to arise from violation of social **taboo**, and soul loss, believed to be caused by the wandering of the soul while

unconscious or soul theft by a malevolent spirit. The former required *lehst-conos*, exorcism, and the latter *ehldilna*, **soul retrieval**.

Today the Wintun shaman attributes many diseases to some form of self-inflicted stress, either emotional, physical, or psychological. Many of these conditions are treated with medicinal herbs and corrections in attitude, care of the body, and proper nutrition. The diseases of the white man, e.g., ulcers, cirrhosis of the liver, certain cancers, etc., are considered beyond the healing powers of the shaman unless detected very early.

Paraphernalia

Shamans carry a tube, horn, or length of hollow bone for the sucking extraction of "pains." Rattles are essential and found in various kinds. Shamans who perform *ehldilna* have a staff with a small basket attached for retrieving the lost souls. Sacred yellow hammer **feathers** are used to extract harmful or violent dreams from the patients. Some shamans carry a wooden pipe that embodies spirits who can be consulted for advice.

Kalweit, Holger. *Shamans, Healers, and Medicine Men*. Boston: Shambhala Publications, 1992.

Knudtson, P. H. "Flora Jones, Shaman of the Wintu." *Shaman's Drum* 39 (Fall 1995): 27–30.

Lyon, William S. *Encyclopedia of Native American Shamanism: Sacred Ceremonies of North America*. Santa Barbara, CA: ABC-CLIO, 1998.

Wiradjeri

A tribe of **Aboriginal** people living in eastern New South Wales, **Australia**. The following is the traditional "**making**," or **initiation**, and **training** of Wiradjeri **shamans**.

The Call

Early signs in childhood of a natural gift are necessary for candidacy. The Wiradjeri test the child's ability to interpret

signs in conversations built with specifically constructed sentences. The child undergoes intense training in the tribal mythology and the simpler aspects of the profession. The child receives an individual **helping spirit** in addition to the hereditary **spirit** of his or her tribe.

After his initiation into manhood, the young man's **teacher**, usually his father, rubs quartz **crystals** into his body and puts them into his **water** to drink. This transmission of **power** enables the boy to begin to see spirits.

Initiation

Initiation occurs in several stages. After he succeeds in seeing spirits, he is taken by his teacher to the grave of spirits who rub his body and insert more crystals. The initiate's individual helping spirit is sung into his chest and he is taught the **song** and **ritual** needed to release it from his body. This helping spirit leads the boy and his father to a hollow tree containing little snakes or *Daramulans*, the sons of **Baiami**, the creator of the first man. The *Daramulans* rub the initiate's body transmitting to him more power.

Finally the initiate has gathered enough power to ascend with his father on the father's magical cord into the **Upperworld** to meet *Baiami*, the true source of power for Wiradjeri shamans. *Baiami* will complete his initiation. The opening in the **sky** that grants access to *Baiami* opens and shuts quickly and continuously. Anyone touched or caught by the opening will lose his powers and die as soon as he returns to **earth**.

First *Baiami* causes *kali*, liquefied quartz crystals, to fall in a great waterfall on the initiate. The *kali* is spread all over the body and completely absorbed in a rite is called *kurini*. In the next stage *Baiami* **sings** a piece of quartz from his body into the initiate's head to give him **spirit vision**. He then sings a flame, from his body into the initiate's chest and teaches him how to release the flame. In the final stage, *Baiami* sings a magical cord in the initiate, up

one leg across the chest and down the other leg. The initiation is complete.

Training

The ability to work with the powers of the *kali*, crystal, flame, and cord must all be mastered. Years are required to become proficient in the applications of these magical substances. Some shamans will become more powerful and able than others. They all must learn how to **diagnose** and treat **illness**, produce the magical stones, cords and helping spirits from his body, summon the spirits, and exercise various psychic powers.

When these powers are mastered, Wiradjeri shamans are able to send their helping spirits to learn what was happening at a distance or to transform into animal form to go there himself. They "fast travel," moving effortlessly at abnormally high speeds over great distances, disappear and reappear in an separate location, and display **mastery of fire**. The retention of these powers depends on self-discipline and the observance of traditional taboos.

Wiradjeri shamans also gain power from *Wawi*, a serpent-like creature who lives in deep waterholes. Shamans who succeed in finding *Wawi* and entering his den are given new **power songs** to bring back to their people. See also **the call**.

Eliade, Mircea. *Shamanism: Archaic Techniques of Ecstasy*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1964.

Elkin, A. P. *Aboriginal Men of High Degree*. New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 1994.

Kalweit, Holger. *Dreamtime and Inner Space: The World of the Shaman*. Boston: Shambhala Publications, 1988.

Wirikuta

Wirikuta, which means Paradise, is the Sacred Land of Peyote and the place of the mythological origin of the **Huichol**

people. It is found in the mountains near San Luís Potosí and is the destination of the Huichol **peyote hunt**.

Witch Doctor

A somewhat pejorative term of uncertain origin, usually used incorrectly to refer to a sorcerer or practitioner of the **sacred** arts of ill repute. A witch doctor is actually a practitioner who can doctor the harmful effects of witchcraft. For example, witch doctors are called on to reverse the effects of *tokoloshe* (ghosts sent by witches) throughout **Africa**. Witch doctor can also refer to a **shaman** who is skilled in counteracting the *tagati* (hexes) placed on others by witches. See also **sangoma** and **Zulu**.

Heinze, R. I. *Shamans of the 20th Century*. New York: Irvington Publishers, Inc., 1991.

Mutwa, Credo Vusa'mazulu. *Song of the Stars: The Lore of a Zulu Shaman*. Barrytown, NY: Station Hill Openings, 1996.

Wochangi

The **power** received by the **shaman** from a **helping spirit** or other source. The **Lakota** believe that *wochangi*, or spiritual power, is found in all things because all things are **sacred**. Thus, *wochangi* can also be given by all created things if one is attentive.

Lyon, William S. *Encyclopedia of Native American Shamanism: Sacred Ceremonies of North America*. Santa Barbara, CA: ABC-CLIO, 1998.

Wohpe

The **Lakota** term for the White Buffalo Calf Maiden who brought the Sacred Calf Pipe. See also **sacred pipe**.

Lyon, William S. *Encyclopedia of Native American Shamanism: Sacred Ceremonies of North America*. Santa Barbara, CA: ABC-CLIO, 1998.

Womb

For the **shaman** the womb is both literal, a **helping spirit**, and symbolic, a metaphor of the cosmic womb from which all life comes. The boundaries of All-That-Is, the whole universe, are found within the cosmic womb. For shamans, the cosmic womb is the feminine force that contains the masculine force, consciousness, which together are the divine, androgynous, creative force that is the **Kosmos**.

The Source, the path to the center, and the womb are all represented in the **spiral**, common in shamanic **cultures**, and in the labyrinth. The spiral represents the path to The Source, the point of origin within the Unknown. The spiral cycle is a symbolic reminder of the infinite process of death and rebirth that resonates with the vibrations and **rhythms** of the universe itself.

Each new shaman was once a novice who died in his or her **initiation** and was reborn a shaman. Thus **cave** and wombs are often the locations for initiations. A **journey** into the “womb” during initiation represents a journey to the center, a return to The Source.

Many shamanic people see the physical configuration of the womb reflected in the hexagon and in particular in the hexagonal rock **crystals**, like quartz, emeralds, and tourmaline. Therefore these stones are often prized and powerful tools for the shaman.

The womb is also literally a place of **power** for female shamans. The **spirit** of the womb is a helping spirit. The womb itself is the **dreaming** organ of the female body. With the womb as a **teacher** of the cosmic womb, females have the opportunity to perceive **knowledge** directly.

In terms of **energy**, females know The Source directly through the womb. In **training** they do not have to move toward it, but they must learn to understand it. The male in training is always approaching, moving toward knowledge, but never reaching it. The male novice builds understanding step by step.

These are equally valid ways of understanding, yet they are very different ways of experiencing life and energy. These differences affect the ways male and female shamans are trained and initiated.

Donner, Florinda. *Being-in-Dreaming: An Initiation into the Sorcerer's World*. San Francisco: Harper-Collins, 1992.

Ripinsky-Naxon, M. *The Nature of Shamanism: Substance and Function of a Religious Metaphor*. Albany: State University of New York Press, 1993.

Words

Words and **song** are used by **shamans** to heal, charge remedies, call in **spirit** energies for **power**, and to guide others along their own altered state **journeys**. Words have creative power all their own when carried by the breath of the shaman. The words spoken over a remedy or the song sung during the **healing** are an essential part of the cure. For example, the **payé** works with **ayahuasca** and **icaros** (songs) together in healing sessions. One South American shaman said definitively, “What good do you think my remedies would be if I didn’t **sing** to them?” See also **altered states of consciousness** and **South America**.

Schultes, R. E., and R. F. Raffauf. *Vine of the Soul: Medicine Men, Their Plants and Rituals in the Colombian Amazonia*. Santa Fe, NM: Synergetic Press, 2004.

World Axis

The world axis is the connection between the seen (physical) and the unseen (spiritual) worlds; it is the **axis mundi**. Found in most **cultures**, it is visualized as a great tree creating a central axis that connects all of the **Kosmos**. See also **Tree of Life**.

World Hypothesis

A world hypothesis consists of the fundamental beliefs about the nature of the world and reality that underlies the life and work of a community. The majority of people in a community then take this set of assumptions of their **culture** or subculture unquestioningly and interpret the world through that lens. Their consensual world hypothesis goes unquestioned and supports their worldview.

Practically speaking, this means that any individual's interpretation of a given phenomena will be largely determined by his or her personal beliefs, philosophy, and world hypothesis. And that this process of arriving at an interpretation is largely unconscious and appears to the individual as "the way it is."

At the same time diverse philosophies and spiritual traditions can nudge individuals to become conscious of their own world hypothesis. The worldviews of others can provoke an individual to question the underlying assumptions of his or her worldview. In the face of this diversity of ideas we must all acknowledge that we just do not know, indeed cannot know, the ultimate nature of many things.

The world hypotheses of shamanic cultures are based on the stories of "a **time** before time" when humankind was not separate from God. In contrast, the story of the separation between God and humankind is fundamental to the world hypotheses of most first-world nations. These stories profoundly shape their respective worldviews. For this reason it is a challenge for contemporary humankind to understand the **shaman** and the shaman's experience of the world. See also **religion**.

Heinze, R. I. *Shamans of the 20th Century*. New York: Irvington Publishers, Inc., 1991.

World Mountain

(Also: Cosmic Mountain) A legendary mountain that stands at the center of

the world from which grows the **World Tree**, or **Tree of Life**. The World Mountain is central in the beliefs of many shamanic **cultures**, particularly across Asia, marking the interconnection of the physical and spiritual realms.

The World Mountain has three, four, or seven steps, symbolizing passage into **sacred** spiritual realms. At the top of the World Mountain grows the World Tree, the connection used by **shamans** to move between the many realms of the **spirit** world and the source of life and immortality. In many cultures the shaman is born or initiated on the World Tree.

Nebesky-Wojkowitz, R. *Oracles and Demons of Tibet: The Cult and Iconography of the Tibetan Protective Dieties*. Delhi: Book Faith India, 1996.

World Tree

The World Tree is the connection between the seen (physical) and the unseen (spiritual) worlds; it is the **axis mundi**. Found in most **cultures**, it is visualized as a great tree connecting all of the **Kosmos**. See also **Tree of Life**.

Wounded Healer

The **shaman** is often referred to as the "wounded healer," because he or she must heal him/herself from a spontaneous wound or **illness** inflicted by the spirit world. This mysterious sickness is in many traditions **the call** by which the novice is challenged to become a shaman. Those who learn from the spirits how to heal from this illness become shamans and continue their **training**. Those who do not are left weak, or sickly, mentally ill, or dead.

This transformational crisis is ubiquitous throughout shamanic **cultures**. Whether this experience is considered the call, the **initiation**, or both may vary culture to culture, but is nonetheless essential for the emergence of a new shaman.

The “wound” may be a physical or mental illness or an emotional or spiritual crisis. The illness is often the direct result of a spontaneous **trance** state caused by unintentional spirit **possession**. Whether or not the wounded is aware of spirit as the cause of the distress, the experience forces the wounded to learn from the spirit world and trust it to recover.

Wounding of the depth and breadth to transform one into a healer is unplanned and uncontrollable by humans. When an individual quests for the experience intentionally, it rarely occurs. As with the **visions** of a **vision quest**, the individual’s intention and desire alone do not assure its occurrence.

Shamans who have experienced this type of initiation describe their internal experience as that of journeying in the spirit world, while externally their body lies sick or semi-comatose. In the spirit world they are challenged, trained in shamanic work, and initiated by their spirit **teachers**. In this way they experience **healing**, learn skills, and receive the wisdom to serve the community. If successfully initiated, they return to their body, heal physically, and begin their life as a shaman.

The phrase “wounded healer” is commonly used as a psychological metaphor referring to any human experience that brings the individual close to physical or psychological death due to a disconnection from **ordinary reality**. This experience does not make the individual a shaman, literally. However, the path of the shaman can serve a powerful metaphor for this type of healing and personal transformation. See also **journey**.

Achterberg, J. “The Wounded Healer: Transformational Journeys in Modern Medicine.” In G. Doore (Ed.), *Shaman’s Path: Healing, Personal Growth and Empowerment*. Boston, MA: Shambala Publications, 1988.

Wu

The **shamans** of **ancient China**. The spiritual traditions of pre-Confucian, pre-Buddhist **China** were shamanic, pantheistic, and matrifocal in character. The spiritual functionaries were predominantly female, the *wu*. Males, the *xi* or *hsi*, served traditional roles within the spiritual service, some as shamans and some as **transformed shamans**. In practice the shamans were called *wu*, regardless of **gender**.

The *wu* communicated with the **spirits** and deities in **trance** states induced with drumming, dancing, meditation, and **song** to perform **divination**, diagnose and heal **illness**, guide the **souls** of the deceased to the next life (**psychopomp**), foretell the future, and perform magic, particularly to control the **weather**. In early Chinese traditions **rituals** were conducted to honor the **Ancestors**, offer **sacrifices**, and maintain harmony between Heaven and **Earth**. Some *wu* performed these functions on a familial level, while others performed them for the court as **state shamans**.

The ancient Chinese believed that all the wisdom affecting human affairs lay in the **Upperworld** and that access to that wisdom was necessary for political authority. The *wu* were responsible for communication between earth and deities of the Upperworld. Therefore the *wu* were a crucial part of every state court. Some scholars propose that the king was actually the head shaman.

The *wu* was a person upon whom “the Bright Spirit” had descended as they entered trance. *Wu* practicing in the northern provinces of China tended to use journeying trance states, similar to their neighbors in **Siberia**, in which the *wu*’s soul flies into the **spirit** world. *Wu* practicing in the southern provinces tended to use **embodiment** trance states, similar to their southern neighbors, in which the deity or **helping spirit** is invoked in the body of the *wu*.

Texts from 500 B.C. state that the *wu* stood apart from others in their

exceptional awareness and deeply penetrating understanding of the interrelating realms of the physical and spiritual worlds. The *wu* were believed to be exceptional individuals who were highly vigorous, virtuous, lively, reverent, and principled. The *wu* were wise and radiant individuals, who some believed drew the Bright Spirit to themselves through their exceptional character and personal force of spirit. See also **journey**.

Heinze, R. I. *Shamans of the 20th Century*. New York: Irvington Publishers, Inc., 1991.

Yuan, Chu. *The Nine Songs: A Study of Shamanism in Ancient China*. San Francisco: City Lights Books, 1973.

Wurunjerri

A tribe of Aboriginal people located near Melbourne in Victoria, New South Wales, Australia. The essential and profound root of Wurunjerri **culture** is *Tjukurpa*, the **dreamtime**. *Tjukurpa* is existence—past, present, and future—and the explanation of existence. It is the land, the people, their actions day-to-day, like hunting, gathering, marrying, and conducting **ritual**, and the Dreamtime laws that govern these actions.

Tjukurpa has always been and it is still unfolding alongside present events. It is being recreated and celebrated by certain Aboriginal people today who live in a cyclical timeframe with nature and the seasons. For 40,000 years they have walked the same paths on the same day at the same time as their **Ancestors**. They live with a connection to all things that generates an awe-inspiring responsibility toward the gift of life in all things.

Initiations

A Wurunjerri boy is first “made a man” in his **initiations** into adulthood, before he can be “made a **clever man**” or **shaman**. At approximately ten to twelve years of age, the boy is taken to a secret, sacred **place** where the power of the

bala, his hereditary **totem spirit**, is sung into him by his **teacher**, who is usually his father or grandfather. The **bala** gives the boy permission to begin to train to become a shaman.

Boys who have shown signs of shamanic potential in their childhood must cultivate a relationship with a teacher. This teacher, usually the father or grandfather, trains the initiated young man to work with the **power** of his **bala** and teaches him secret aspects of mythological, spiritual, and esoteric **knowledge**. Much of the teaching transpires between the **spirit** of the teacher and that of the novice in the Dreamtime.

The novice must learn to master the **chants**, rituals, and powers of concentration necessary to bring forth the **bala** from his body and into manifestation. When the novice can manifest this **vision** of the tribe's patron and protector, he is ready to begin the final rituals of initiation.

Final Initiation Rituals

Baiami, a Dreamtime ancestor and creator of the first man, is the ultimate source of the Wurunjerri shaman's power. Prior to this stage the teaching has been one-to-one and mostly in secret. These final three phases of initiation are carried out in public, in a place sacred to **Baiami**, with all of the novices and their teachers present.

The novices and teachers chant to call in **Baiami**, who manifests as a “clever man” with light radiating from his eyes. His mouth foams with sacred **kali**, liquefied quartz **crystals**, which he makes flow over the initiates in a process called *ku'rini*, “penetration into them.” The **kali** penetrates immediately into the bodies of the initiates giving them the special power to sprout **feathers** from their arms. The ritual is closed. Over time the initiate's feathers will grow into wings.

Several days later, **Baiami** is summoned again for the second phase of initiation. He begins by showing the initiates how to fly with their new wings.

Baiami then draws a crystal from his body and “**sings**” it into the forehead of each initiate to endow them with the ability to “see” into other realms. Finally, *Baiami* takes a flame from his own body and sings it into the chest of each initiate. With that act the ritual is closed. The initiates integrate these experiences and the powers they have been given with their teachers.

When **fire** and crystal have penetrated each initiate and they have all learned to fly, *Baiami* is invoked a third time. *Baiami* lays a cord over each initiate from legs to chest and sings it into their bodies. The initiates practice with their cords and will ultimately learn to use them for **healing** and other acts of power. When the string is mastered then the *warajun*, the **soul** of the initiate, and his **helping spirits** can travel freely throughout the Dreamtime. The final initiation is complete and *Baiami* has definitively “made a clever man.” See also **making**.

Clanton-Collins, J. “An Interview with Burnam Burnam.” *Shaman's Drum* 14 (Fall–Winter, 1988).

Kalweit, Holger. *Shamans, Healers, and Medicine Men*. Boston: Shambhala Publications, 1992.

Wyrð

Wyrð is the ancient **Anglo-Saxon** version of the **Great Mystery**—the unexplainable force underlying all of existence and at the essence of all shamanic practices. Originally wyrð meant the strange or unexplainable in **sacred** realms, though today it simply means weird in mundane realms.

At the essence of wyrð is the belief that the universe exists within polarities

of forces, similar to the **Zulu** concept of the original and eternal battle between Fire/Light and Ice/Dark or the Eastern concepts of yin and yang. The Anglo-Saxon creation mythology that speaks of wyrð is best preserved in Germanic and Norse **myths** and stories. The Anglo-Saxon universe originally consisted of **fire** and ice, two mighty, unimaginably vast force regions. They came together and exploded, creating a great mist of magic and vitality that exists beyond **time**, like the substance of the **dreamtime**.

This “mist of knowledge” conceals wisdom about the nature of life in **ordinary reality**. It can only be parted in certain states of consciousness by individuals with the **knowledge** of magic, **shamanism**, and **sacred technologies** of **trance**. With these skills the boundaries of the mist becomes permeable and inner and outer realities can be transcended.

Wyrð is also a vast web of living fibers that flow through the entire universe, linking absolutely everything—each person, object, event, thought, and feeling. This web is similar to Grandmother Spider Woman's web of life in **North America** or the web of *aka* threads used by Hawaiian *kahuna*. The European **shamans** envisioned a web of fibers so sensitive that any movement, thought, or happening, no matter how small, resonated through the entire web of wyrð. See also **Hawaii**.

Allen-Coombe, J. “Weaving the Way of Wyrð: An Interview with Brian Bates.” *Shaman's Drum* 27 (Spring 1992): 20–29.

Bates, Brian. *The Way of Wyrð: Tales of an Anglo-Saxon Sorcerer*. Carlsbad, CA: Hay House, 2005.



Xahluigax Xaikilgaiagiba

Xahluigax xaikilgaiagiba is the Ghost Ceremony or Devil Ceremony of the Pomo of the **California region of North America**. This **ceremony**, conducted to atone for misdeeds against the dead, is one of the most vital ceremonial acts performed by the Pomo. Because offenses against the dead can cause

illness among the living, the *xahluigax xaikilgaiagiba* also functions as preventative **medicine**.

The ceremony, most often held in the spring, is performed in a special **dance** house traditionally built anew for each ceremony. Only initiated men perform this four-day **ritual**. Illness could befall the presence of those who do not belong at the ceremony. There are two classes of dancers who participate: the ordinary ghost-dancer and the other is the *katsa'tala*, or **art** dancer, who performs fire-eating displays of **power**. See also **fire**.

Lyon, William S. *Encyclopedia of Native American Shamanism: Sacred Ceremonies of North America*. Santa Barbara, CA: ABC-CLIO, 1998.

Y

Yachaj

(Also *yachaq*) *Yachaj* is the **Quechua** word for **shaman**, “the one who knows.” *Sinchi yachaj*, “strong shaman” refers to a powerful or a master shaman.

Yagé

Yagé is another name for the *ayahuasca*, a hallucinogenic drink prepared from rain forest plants that is widely used by South American **shamans**. The shamans say that *yagé* has **power** and force of will all of its own. When consumed, *yagé* shares its **knowledge**, allowing the shaman to reach the stars of their origin, enter the **spirit** of plants, animals and people, to know the true intent of people’s actions, to foresee the future, to **diagnose** and cure **illness**, and to travel throughout all the realms of the **Kosmos**. See also **South America**.

Langdon, E. Jean, and G. Bear. *Portals of Power: Shamanism in South America*. Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1992.

Yajé

See *ayahuasca* and *yagé*.

Yakee

See *epená*.

Yakut

The name given the Sakhá, a native people of **Siberia**, by the Russian colonists. Sakhá was reinstated as the official name in 1990. The Yakuts are found in the central Lena Basin of Northeast Siberia. The general patterns

found in the **shamanism** of this region it that of Siberian **shamans**.

Cosmology

The Yakut classify the *bis*, or gods/goddesses and **spirits**, in two large classes: those of the **Upperworld**, the *tangara* or celestial *bis*, and those of the **Lowerworld**, the subterranean *bis* below. There is no opposition between them and they are equally powerful. It is more a classification based on where they are found in the spirit world.

The celestial *bis* are benevolent, but passive and uninvolved in human existence. The highest celestial deity is *Art Toyon Aga*, who resides in the ninth layer of the Upperworld, or **Sky**. He shines like the **sun** and speaks through the voice of the thunder. There are seven other great deities “above” and a multitude of lesser deities.

The subterranean *bis* can be malevolent and vindictive, as they are closer to the **earth**, and allied to men by ties of **blood**. The highest subterranean deity is *Uliü-Toyon*, “the All-Powerful Lord of the Infinite.” *Uliü-Toyon* and *Art Toyon Aga* are treated as equals. The *bis* below are also comprised of eight great deities and an unlimited number of spirits. *Uliü-Toyon* is not ill-disposed to human and is highly involved and interested in their affairs.

Uliü-Toyon personifies active existence, in all of its suffering, desires, struggles. When *Uliü-Toyon* walks the earth shakes and the hearts of the mortals burst with terror if they look into his face. *Uliü-Toyon* gave humankind **fire**, taught the shamans to relieve suffering, and created the **birds**, woodland animals, and the forests themselves.

First Shaman

In Yakut mythology, Eagle is the creator of the **First Shaman**. Similar to the Buryat, it depends on the story whether the Eagle is parent or **teacher**. The Eagle is called *Ai*, the “Creator”, and *Ai Toyon*, the “Creator of Light.” *Ai Toyon*’s children are represented as bird spirits, who may be the **souls** of deceased Yakuts,

perching in the branches of the **Tree of Life**. At the top of the tree, a birch, is the two-headed eagle, *Toyon Kotor*, the “Lord of the Birds.” All **ancestor** spirits who play a role in the selection of new shamans are the descendants of the mythical “First Shaman” selected by *Ai Toyon*.

The First Shaman was extraordinarily powerful and equally prideful. He refused to recognize the supreme **power** of *Ai*. *Ai*, noticing that the First Shaman had transformed his body into a mass of snakes, sent down fire to burn him. Unbelievably a toad emerged from the flames. The animal **helping spirits** from whom the outstanding shamans of the Yakut acquire power came for this original toad, the essence of the First Shaman.

The Call—Dismemberment

The future Yakut shaman is called spontaneously by a spirit who may be a deity, mythical being, **animal spirit**, or *ämägät*, the soul of a deceased shaman. The candidate lies in the yurt as if dead for several days or suddenly loses **ordinary consciousness** and withdraws into the forests, feeds on tree bark, and throws himself into **water**, fire, and onto knives, all means of validating **trance**.

While the candidate's body displays symptoms of unexplained mental or physical **illness** the candidate has entered an altered state. His soul is taken into the spirit world where he is dismembered. There are numerous accounts of the **dismemberment** suffered by individuals who became shaman. For example, one candidate's limbs were removed with an iron hook; his flesh was scraped away and with the **bodily fluids** thrown away, the bones were completely cleaned, and his eyes torn from their sockets. After this dismemberment all the bones were gathered by the spirits and fastened together with iron.

The altered state experience of the candidate often continues from three to seven days, creating the regeneration

and maturation of the candidate's new shaman's body. The mythical “Bird-of-Prey-Mother” appears only twice in a shaman's lifetime: at his or her birth through dismemberment and at his or her death. This great bird has the head of an eagle with an iron beak, iron **feathers**, hooked claws, and a long tail.

She lays her eggs on the Tree of Life and sits on them as the new shaman's bodies develop. Great shamans are hatched in three years, middling shamans in two, and lesser shamans in one. When the shaman's soul is hatched from the egg, the Bird-of-Prey-Mother gives it to a great shamaness, with only one eye, one arm, and one bone. She rocks the soul in an iron cradle and feeds it clotted blood as she teaches. In other stories the soul is taken to the lowerworld and locked in a house for one to three years where it is dismembered and taught by spirits.

The Bird-of-Prey-Mother then flies with the soul to the lowerworld and leaves it to mature on a branch of a pitch pine. When the soul has matured to its capacity, the Bird-of-Prey-Mother flies with it to the **Middleworld**, where the body is cut to bits and distributed among the malevolent spirits of **disease** and death. Each spirit devours a piece of the body, which gives the future shaman the power to cure the corresponding disease. When the malevolent spirits depart, the Bird-of-Prey-Mother restores the bones and the body, and the candidate, still lying in the yurt, wakes as if from a very long and strange **dream**.

Obtaining Power

Shamanic power is obtained from the spirit world; it is not hereditary among the Yakut. However, the *ämägät*, the soul of the shaman, tends to remain associated with its family after death. It may later incarnate itself in the same family and the individual with then become a shaman.

The call is only the beginning of obtaining shamanic powers. After the experience, **training** continues with the

helping spirit and a master shaman. Later there will be a public **initiation** involving a series of ceremonies and demonstration of shamanic abilities. Often after the strangeness of “the call,” the new candidate’s family appeals to an old shaman to teach the frightened and confused youth the various kinds of spirits, the **songs** and techniques to summon, and most important the mastery of various trance states.

Initiation

There are levels of mastery in the shaman’s training that are marked with the performance of initiation **rituals**. The level of the following initiation ritual is unclear. The master shaman takes the new student up on a hill or into a plain with eighteen chaste young men and women, nine of each. The student is given a new **costume, drum, and drumstick**, all objects of power. The master shaman then dons his or her own costume and takes the novice’s soul on a long ecstatic **journey**.

They begin on the **World Mountain**. The master shows the novice the forks in the road that lead to the paths that lead to the peaks where the spirits of sickness live. Together they enter a house and the master shows the novice how to recognize the sicknesses in the various parts of the body and cure them. Each time the master names a part of the body, he or she spits in the disciple’s mouth. The student swallows the spittle that conveys the **knowledge** and power to cure.

When the student has learned to cure all the diseases in all the parts of the body, the master shaman takes the student to the Upperworld to learn of the celestial spirits. When this teaching is complete the two return from the spirit world. The new shaman’s body is said to be consecrated and he or she can practice professionally. The new shaman completes the ritual by killing the sacrificial animal and consecrating his or her costume with its blood. The animal is then shared by the participants.

Shamans and Priests

The power of a shaman is determined by the power of the spirits who assist him/her. This, in addition to where the shaman goes in trance, is used to distinguish different types of shamans, healers, and **priests**. To journey to the *bis* below is to travel *allara kyrar*. To journey to the *bis* above is to travel *üsä kyrar*.

The *ai oyuna* conduct ceremonies in which animal **sacrifices** are made to the celestial *bis*. This type of “shaman” does not work in trance and is better described as shaman-priest, or white shaman. The *orto oyuna* work in trance and are typical shamanic healers. They conduct rituals in which they associate with the spirits of the Middle and Lowerworld. They are often referred to as black shamans.

The “great” shamans are the most powerful as they receive their power directly from *Ulii-Toyon* through the helping spirits. They are healers and powerful magicians who work in trance states with the spirits and deities from all the spirit realms. **transformed shamans** are traditionally found among the Yakut. The power of these **gender-variant male shamans** is determined by the spirits who initiate them, as with other Yakut shamans.

There are also the *kennikî oyuna* who are **seers** who work primarily in passive trance states in which they receive information. They are diviners and interpreters of dreams who treat minor illnesses.

Healing

Yakut **shamanic healing** rituals usually includes four stages: evocation of the helping spirits, **divination** to determine the cause of the illness, expulsion of malevolent spirits, and the shaman’s ecstatic journey to the Upperworld.

The third stage, the struggle to expel the malevolent spirits, is dangerous and exhausting. There are many methods, from threats and frightening noises to pulling it from the body of the patient, chasing it away, sucking and spitting it

from his mouth, and driving it away with hands or breath. In extreme cases the shaman must take the malevolent spirit into his or her own body to extract it from the patient. In doing so, the shaman struggles and suffers as he or she fights to overcome the spirit and send it away.

The shaman is often bound in preparation for his or her ecstatic journey to the Upperworld. This practice is found in many **cultures** across Asia, the Arctic, and **North America**. The Yakut do it to ensure that the spirits do not carry the soul of the shaman away completely. The host of the ritual prepares two nooses from strong thongs. One end is secured to each of the shaman's shoulders and the other ends are held by the people present at the ritual.

The shaman's **healing** ritual begins in **silence** with the shaman staring into the fire. He begins to summon his power by putting on his shamanic costume and smoking. A white mare's hide is spread on the floor by the assistant. The shaman drinks cold water and offers it to the four directions. The assistant throws horsehairs on the fire and then covers the ashes with another hide, bringing the room into complete darkness. The shaman sits down on the mare's hide and dreams into a light trance summoning the spirits.

The spirits begin to arrive making birds **sounds** and other noises. There is a faint humming coming from the shaman as he begins to **chant**. The shaman begins to beat the drum and murmur his song. The **singing** and drumming rise to a crescendo. The sounds alternate between bird cries and silence several times. As the shaman feels the spirits coming closer, the **rhythm** of the drumming and singing intensify.

The shaman invokes the help of the *ämägät* and his helping spirits and resumes drumming and singing with furious intensity. The spirits arrive, sometimes so suddenly and violently that the shaman falls over backwards. Then the audience clash iron cymbals

over him, murmuring chants, **invocations**, and encouragement.

The shaman, filled with the power of the spirits, begins leaping and dancing. The fire is rekindled, and he continues to drum and **dance** and leap, in a costume hung with thirty to fifty pounds of **metal** power objects. As he dances he converses with the spirits in many voices. Finally he goes to the patient and summons the spirit who is causing the illness and expels it from the body.

When the malevolent spirits have been expelled, the shaman begins his ecstatic journey to escort the soul of the animal, sacrificed as an **offering** for the success of the ritual. On returning from this ecstatic journey the shaman asks to be "purified" by fire.

Drum

The most powerful drums are those made from the wood of a tree that has been struck by lightning.

Secret Language of Nature

In the course of his training the novice must learn the secret **language** that allows him to communicate with the spirits and animal spirits during his rituals. This secret language is learned from a master shaman or directly from spirits. This is the language of all Nature, of all life, from the time when all things were One.

Costume

The costume of the Yakut shaman displays a complete bird skeleton made of iron along with thirty to fifty pounds of other metal **power objects**. These ornaments create a cacophony of noise during the shaman's wild ritual dance. These metal objects are all alive. They have a spirit and they do not rust.

Metal bars representing arm bones (*tabytala*) are arranged along the arms of the caftan. Small metal "leaves" representing the ribs (*oïlgos timir*) are sewn along the sides of the torso. A large round breastplate is worn as well as objects representing the liver, heart, and other internal organs. Images of the **sacred** animal and bird helping spirits

are attached. A small canoe containing the image of a man, which together represent the “spirit of Madness,” is also attached.

Metal disks are hung on the back of the caftan. One disk represents the **Sun**. Another, a pierced disk, represents the earth and the central opening the shaman uses to access the Lowerworld. Other objects on the back of the caftan include a lunar crescent and an iron chain representing the shaman's power and resistance.

The costume of the transformed shaman consists of a woman's jacket made of the skins of fowl and a white ermine cap.

According to Yakut legend, there were shamans who really flew into the sky not long ago. The **power animal** flew across the sky first, followed by the shaman's drum, and finally the shaman dressed in his or her costume hung with iron. These shamans, the great shamans, were said to be serious, possess tact, above all to possess **humility**. In the spirit of his or her great power, these shamans were not presumptuous, proud, or ill-tempered. In their presence, one could feel both the awareness of power and compassion toward others. See also **altered states of consciousness; ash; black and white shamans; Buryat (Buriat); death and dying; gender variant**.

Eliade, Mircea. *Shamanism: Archaic Techniques of Ecstasy*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1964.

Vitebsky, Piers. *The Shaman*. London: Little, Brown and Company, 1995.

Yapaitu

Yapaitu is a **Wintun** word for a **spirit** from the hills or from Nature. The *yapaitu*, along with the **lehs**, can become a **helping spirit** for a **shaman**. The *yapaitu* is formless and rarely seen; its presence is felt by the shaman.

Lyon, William S. *Encyclopedia of Native American Shamanism: Sacred Ceremonies of North America*. Santa Barbara, CA: ABC-CLIO, 1998.

Yayatü Society

(Also: *yayaat*) One of two curing societies among the Hopi, the other being the Poswimkya. The **shamans** of this society acquire the powers of **healing** and the **mastery of fire** from Hawk. Corn **fetishes** called *yaya*, or *iärriko*, are used in the rituals and ceremonies performed by this society. *Yaya* are made only by shamans following a precise ritual process that involves eagle and parrot **feathers** the latter of which can only be acquired from Mexico. The *yaya*, sacred **power objects**, are placed on the **altar** during rituals and ceremonies. See also **Poswimkya Society** and **sacred**.

Lyon, William S. *Encyclopedia of Native American Shamanism: Sacred Ceremonies of North America*. Santa Barbara, CA: ABC-CLIO, 1998.

Yi dam

The second **soul** of the human multiple soul that resides in the heart. In **Tamang bompo (shamans)** this soul contains all the **mantras** and **healing** knowledge the *bompo* has gained in his or her lifetime. At death, the *bompo* passes the *yi dam* on to his or her best **apprentice**, who is usually within the family. If there is no apprentice or family member, the *yi dam* is passed on to an unsuspecting but worthy candidate.

The *yi dam* of a shaman is more an aspect of the shamanic lineage extending from the **First Shaman** deity, Nara Bön Chen, than it is simply the personal **spirit** of the human shaman. It is a primordial source of shamanic **power** that works through the human it inhabits. For that human, the *yi dam* functions like the tutelary or guardian spirits found in other shamanic traditions.

The Tamang consider the *yi dam* an inner *guru* (**teacher**). The *yi dam* teaches through **possession**, causing the initiate to shake violently, bounce, and often speak incoherently. Apprenticeship with a human guru helps the initiate learn to receive instruction from the *yi dam*, allowing it to reveal new things throughout the years of **training** and the entirety of the *bompo's* life. See also **knowledge** and **multiple soul belief**.

Peters, L. G. "Mystical Experience in Tamang Shamanism." *ReVision* 13, no. 2 (1990): 71–85.

Yomuse

(Also *yommüse*, *yomta* [Miwok]) The most common Maidu term for **shaman**. Maidu *yomi* are divided into three groups relative to the **spirits** who empower them. There are valley *yomi*, foothill *yomi*, and mountain *yomi*. The techniques and procedures of these groups vary slightly.

Lyon, William S. *Encyclopedia of Native American Shamanism: Sacred Ceremonies of North America*. Santa Barbara, CA: ABC-CLIO, 1998.

Yopo

Yopo is a hallucinogenic snuff made from the ground seeds, or beans, of *Anadenanthera peregrina*, a mimosa-like tree growing in the open grasslands of the tropical zones of the Orinoco region and the adjacent Amazon River basins of **South America**. The flat, thin, round, glossy-black seeds occur in rough, woody pods called "Beans of the Hekula Spirits."

The most intense use of *yopo* is found among the Waiká, living in southern Venezuela and the adjacent parts of northern Brazil. The Waiká use the snuff daily, blowing enormous amounts of it into each others nostrils through long tubes made from the stems of plants. The Waiká explain that *yopo* originated in the beginning in the spirit world when the

Sun created various beings to function as intermediaries with humankind. The Sun kept *yopo*, one of those intermediaries, in its navel where the Daughter of the Sun found it. The Daughter of the Sun took *yopo* and gave it to humankind.

Yopo is so valuable as an intermediary with the spirit world that highland peoples, who live in regions where *Anadenanthera* does not grow, trade for it with people of the tropical lowlands. There is evidence that *Anadenanthera* was cultivated outside of its natural range in the past. It was also grown in the West Indies centuries ago, where the snuff is called **cohoba** by the Taino people of that region.

Yopo snuff is believed to have been in wider use prior to the conquest by the Spaniards in South America. Evidence of *yopo* use is found among Chibchan and Muisca tribes as far west as the Colombian Andes and to the east by all the peoples of the upper Orinoco.

There are two species of *Anadenanthera* that provide hallucinogenic snuff. The second species, *Anadenanthera colubrina*, grows in southern South America where the snuff, called *vilca*, *huilca*, and *sebil*, was used by the indigenous peoples of Argentina and southern Peru in pre-colonial times. The **Inkan shamans** are reported to have added *vilca* to their **chicha** for **divination**. The Mashco of northern Argentina continue to smoke the seeds and snuff the powder today.

Use

Yopo is snuffed by the **payé** (shaman) to induce **trance** states that enable the *payé* to communicate with the *hekula* spirits to divine information, diagnose illness, prescribe remedies, perform **healings**, and to protect the tribe against epidemic **diseases**.

In some **cultures** or tribes *yopo* is snuffed by all adult males, like the Waiká, for example. *Yopo* is also used by hunters to make themselves and their dogs more alert. It is sometimes taken as a daily stimulant, as it is by the Guahibo people.

Preparation

Yopo is prepared from the ground seeds, or beans, of *Anadenanthera peregrina* of the bean family. There is a great deal of variation in the preparation of *yopo* from one tribe to another and from one area to another within tribes. Generally speaking, the beans are moistened and rolled into a paste or toasted dry before being ground into a powder. The resulting gray green powder is usually mixed with an alkaline plant **ash** or lime from snail shells. Other plant admixtures are never added.

In one traditional preparation, the Maypure gather and break open the pods of *Anadenanthera*, soak the beans in **water**, and allowed them to ferment until they turned black. This process softens the beans so that they can be kneaded into cakes with cassava flour and lime from snail shells. The cakes are allowed to dry and then ground into powder when the snuff was needed.

In a different traditional preparation the Guahibo gather the seeds of *Anadenanthera*, roast them, and then grind them into powder with a wooden platter and pestle. The resulting snuff was stored in a container fashioned from the leg-bone of a jaguar. The snuff is blown into the nostrils through a Y-shaped tube made from the leg bones of a long-legged bird, like a heron.

Active Principle

The psychoactive constituents in *yopo* are tryptamine derivatives, which belong to the class of indole alkaloids including open carbon chain derivatives, dimethyltryptamine (DMT) and bufotenine, and the closed carbon chain derivatives, 2-methyl- beta-carboline and 1,2-dimethyl-6-methoxytetrahydro-beta-carboline. The active constituents of *A. peregrina* and *A. colubrina* are the same and equally psychoactive.

Ritual of Receiving the Plant Spirit, or Plant Medicine

The Waiká *payé* begins by chanting to the *Hekula* spirits, either alone or with other adult men. The *payé*'s **chants** call

the *Hekula* spirits into the **ritual** so that they are available to communicate with those who enter a *yopo* induced trance state. Long tubes of plant stems or animal bone are used to blow the *yopo* into each of the receiver's nostrils.

After an initial period of head **pain** and muscular contortion, the *payé* rises to **dance**, chant, and shriek as he continues to call in the *Hekula* spirits. When the spirits are present and the *payé* can proceed with the divination, healing, or other purpose of the ritual.

Characteristics of the Induced Altered State

Immediately after the snuff is administered, the face contorts and the muscles, especially of the upper body, tremble or spasm. In this phase *yopo* causes muscular twitches, slight convulsions, and a lack of muscular co-ordination, followed by nausea. Within approximately five minutes, the pain gives way to an ecstatic trance state filled with **visions** of the spirit world.

This phase of trance, which lasts from thirty to sixty minutes, can involve dancing and chanting punctuated by violent actions and shrieks as the individual calls on the *hekula* spirits for communication. This activity gives way to a third phase of deep trance or sleep filled with visions which continue for some time.

Songs and Dances

The *payé*'s chants are an essential part of working with *yopo*. The chants are used to call in the *Hekula* spirits so that they will make themselves available the people in trance who are seeking connection and communication. See also **altered states of consciousness; Andes, South America; entheogen; plant hallucinogens; plant medicines.**

Schultes, Richard Evans, Albert Hofmann, and Christian Rätsch. *Plants of the Gods: Their Sacred, Healing, and Hallucinogenic Powers.* Rochester, VT: Healing Arts Press, 2001.

Yualai

(Also Yualayi, Euahlayi) **Aboriginal** people of New South Wales, **Australia**. Male **shamans** are selected from initiated young men who have shown innate skills and an inclination toward the profession during childhood. For their shamanic **initiation** they are taken by older shamans to a grave where they are bound and left for several nights. As soon as the initiate is alone, several animals appear and touch and lick him. Then a **spirit** man appears with a stick that he thrusts into the initiate's head, creating a hole into which he puts a magical stone the size of a lemon. Then spirits appear to teach him the **healing songs** of the art.

Baiami, the Creator of the first man, is held to be the source of the magical **crystal** inserted in the shaman's head. **Baiami** detaches fragments of crystal from his throne in the **Sky** and throws the fragments of crystal down to **earth**. The crystals are believed to be solidified light and are the source of the shaman's **power**. **Baiami** performs the initiation of some young men by sprinkling them with liquefied quartz crystal, which is absorbed into the body, charging the initiate with **sacred** power.

After initiation the new shaman is connected to his individual **helping spirit**, or *yunbeai*, who assists the shaman in his profession. Any injury to the *yunbeai* hurts the shaman, therefore there are strict **taboos** against hunting or eating one's *yunbeai* in **ordinary reality**. When in danger the shaman can shapeshift into the *yunbeai*.

Yualai shamans also have a **minggah**, or spirit tree. The most powerful shamans also have **goomah**, or spirit stones. A shaman's *yunbeai* may dwell in the *minggah* or the *goomah* as well as any other spirit friendly to the shaman. When the shaman needs the assistance of the spirits dwelling within these objects, he or she either goes to the tree or stone where they exist in nature or travels to them in spirit in the **dreamtime**. Both tree and stone provide a

place of refuge for the shaman in times of danger, however the *goomah* is a more powerful sanctuary. See also **shapeshifting**.

Eliade, Mircea. *Shamanism: Archaic Techniques of Ecstasy*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1964.

Parker, K. L., et al. *Wise Women of the Dreamtime: Aboriginal Tales of the Ancestral Powers*. Rochester, VT: Inner Traditions International Limited, 1993.

Yupa

Yupa is a **Wintun** word that means to speak from **trance**. It refers to the prophetic speech of **shamans**, whose **helping spirit** speaks through them when they are in a deep **embodiment** trances during **ritual**. *Yupa* distinguishes the shaman's **altered state of consciousness** during **sacred** ceremonies from his or her ordinary state of consciousness.

When the Wintun shaman makes a **diagnosis** or speaks about the subject in hand he or she is in an ordinary state of consciousness that includes a general communication with his or her helping spirits. This is distinguished from the shaman's deep trance states used during **healing** and other sacred rituals.

Lyon, William S. *Encyclopedia of Native American Shamanism: Sacred Ceremonies of North America*. Santa Barbara, CA: ABC-CLIO, 1998.

Yup'ik

The Yup'ik are a whaling people of southwestern Alaska who reside primarily in the Kuskokwim and Yukon river deltas, along the Bering Sea and Norton Sound coasts. The Yup'ik language and some aspects of the **culture** have survived over time. However, the shamanic practices, in particular *Agayuliyararput*—the highly visible masked dancing **rituals**, were ruthlessly

eradicated by Christian missionaries during the nineteenth century.

Agayuliyararput means “our way of making **prayer**,” which is the function of this masked dancing ritual. Specifically, *Agayuliyararput* was danced to open a connection with the spirit world to express particular needs and concerns and to ask for help. These intense and dramatic **dances** were serious spiritual undertakings and always expressed with joy.

The **masks** were conceived of by the *angalkuq* (**angakok** or **shaman**) who saw the masks in **dreams** or **visions**. New masks were created each year according to the *angalkuq*'s vision. They were carved from wood, painted, and decorated in ways rich in Yup'ik symbolism.

These masks were often ugly, at times made from the head of an actual animal. Red and blue were used to denote the masks of spirits or *angalkuqs*. Round mouths usually indicated spirit mouths. A small human face anywhere in the mask represented the spirit within the central figure. *Angalkug* masks were sometimes created with background boards that presented the central figure in the context of land, **air**, or **water**.

Concentric hoops on a mask denote the **Eskimo** universe, composed of five **Upperworlds** and **earth**. An animal in the mouth of a mask expressed the wish for abundant food. A hand with a cutout hole expressed the wish for continuing abundance in the food supply. The intent of the creator of the mask was not to make a realistic mask, but to convey a vision or idea.

The masks embodied the vision of the things the people were asking for from the spirit world, like animals to hunt, good **weather**, the **power** for a particular **healing**, or intercession in other human affairs. Common masks were animals, such as the loon or seal, *ellangaut* (representations of the universe), and Ancestral spirits from the **myths** of the Yup'ik.

The *angalkuq* was a central figure in the dance rituals. He often danced in

masks created to embody his *tuunra* (**torngraq** or **helping spirits**). The powers of the *tuunrat* enable the *angalkuq* to help the community by seeing into the future, curing **illness**, and communicating with the spirits beings of the visible and invisible worlds.

New masks were presented by the *angalkuq* and danced at the rituals. The *angalkuq* explained the new mask's meaning from his vision and the purpose for its creation. After dancing the new masks the ritual process was closed by burning the powerful masks or leaving them in a **sacred** way on the tundra away from the village.

Fienup-Riordan, Ann. *Agayuliyararput, Our Way of Making Prayer*. Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1996.

Yuwipi

The *yuwipi* is a traditional **healing** ritual performed by **Lakota** shamans. The *yuwipi* **ritual** is a form of the **Spirit Lodge** or shaking tent ritual common in **North America**. The name *yuwipi*, from the Dakota language, refers to the binding and wrapping of the practitioner before he or she enters **trance**.

The ritual is performed in a dark space, traditionally a tent or a room in a house or lodge. The **space** is cleansed and made **sacred** by the **shaman** in accordance with the shaman's traditions and **helping spirits**. This usually involves the formal exhibition of the shaman's **power objects** within a square, a ritualistic pattern honoring the four cardinal directions common to practices in the Northern Plains.

The *yuwipi* is attended by members of the community who will support the shaman's trance by **singing** sacred **songs** and drumming. After everyone has entered the **sacred space** and settles, the patient is brought in. The drummer begins and the community joins in the singing. When the shaman is prepared to enter more deeply into trance, he or she is bound and the last

light extinguished. In total darkness the shaman begins to pray out loud. The **prayer** becomes a trance-like song that continues for a long time. The community **sings** and **drums** periodically alternating this with prayer.

The shaman speaks the last prayer and the room becomes silent. Into the **silence** emerges the **sounds** and sensations of the **animal spirits** that have been summoned to help the sick. With their help the shaman works to heal the sick. When the shaman signals that the ritual is over, the lights are turned on the shaman is seated free of the blanket and bindings, now arranged neatly before him.

The *yuwipi* is differentiated from other Spirit Lodge performances by the intricate ritualism with which the ceremonial **paraphernalia** is laid out and by the **offerings of blood** sacrifice. Slices of flesh and skin cut out of the arms, usually of women, and made into offerings to the **spirits** was a traditional part of important Plains rituals. Today the *yuwipi* is also distinguished by the use of a square room or cottage instead of a tent.

A summarized account of a Lakota *yuwipi* ritual follows:

The *yuwipi* is formally requested with the offering of a ceremonial pipe to the shaman. The shaman accepts the request by accepting the pipe, lighting and smoking it. The shaman then instructs those who wish to participate to pray and to believe in the spirits without doubt. Those who cannot suspend doubt, or whom the shaman expects cannot, are asked to leave.

Those who remain prepare themselves by **cleansing** in a steam bath followed by rubbing sweetsage seeds on their head and arms. The shaman takes a seat in the center of the room on a bed of sagebrush, enclosed in a square defined by a string of 147 prayer ties (small red cloth bags filled with **tobacco**). The shaman arranges his power objects, creating an alter within the square and begins to **smudge** the space with dried sage. The drummers begin to drum and **sing**.

The young woman who will make the blood **sacrifice** steps forward onto the blanket facing west. The shaman strokes her left arm with sagebrush to cleanse it and prays over her. The drums thunder and the people sing. Using a razor the shaman cuts thin slices of skin and flesh from the girl's upper arm, leaving wounds that bleed profusely. The same process is repeated, taking a blood sacrifice from an older woman, often the shaman or shaman's wife. The flesh of the two women is collected in a little gourd and placed on the **altar** as an offering to the spirits.

The shaman is stripped to the waist, hands bound tightly behind his back, and wrapped then in a blanket that is secured from neck to feet with a second rope. As the shaman is bound he begins to sing and call on his helping spirits to come. Assistants cover the shaman's face and place face down on the floor. The last lights are extinguished.

The drumbeat changes and the tempo becomes faster and faster inducing the shaman's deep trance state. The singing and drumming have built to an intensity at this point. Nonetheless, a **rattle** can be heard in the midst of the turmoil, moving around the room approximately two meters in the air. The drums and singing stop. The spirits have arrived.

The spirits are beseeched in prayer by those present who ask for specific cures, care, and protections. With the signal of the shaman's song the drumming and singing may begin again with even more force than before. More spirits arrive, animating objects like drums and rattles and speaking from moving points about the room.

The shaman's voice can also be heard coming from all over the room. The shaman speaks aloud when there are messages from the spirits for the people present. These messages are given in response to the prayers and questions of the participants. Healings are performed through the **power** of the spirits present. If necessary to heal the patient, the shaman will signal for more

drumming and call on even more powerful spirits. See also **Shaking Tent Ceremony**.

Hultkrantz, A. "Spirit Lodge, a North American Shamanistic Séance." In *Studies in Shamanism*. Stockholm: Almqvist & Wiksell, 1962.

Williams, W. L. *The Spirit and the Flesh*. Boston: Beacon Press, 1992.

Z

Zulu

The Zulu are Bantu-speaking people of the Natal Province of South Africa. They are related to the Xhosa, Nbedele, and other people of southern **Africa**. The Bantu **language** is closely related to Xhosa and Swazi with which it forms the Nguni language group.

There are many classes of Zulu practitioners which involve mastery of **trance** states and other esoteric arts. The *iNyanga*, *sangoma*, and *sanusi* are the three classes, who like the **shaman**, work in altered states with **helping spirits** to serve their community. An individual practitioner may serve more than one role as his or her skills evolve over a lifetime.

These practitioners must strive ceaselessly to be ethical in everything they do. They do not practice **sorcery** or use supernatural powers to attain ordinary human desires. The fate of the tribe or nation may depend upon their discernment. They are accountable for the natural and the supernatural realms, and ultimately to the entire pattern of the universe.

Cosmology

Zulu mythology describes the origins of the continuous battle between dark and light within the human **soul**. The *sangoma* helps others to fight this battle. This is the battle that must always be fought and never won. Restoring balance to this dynamic is the basis of the *sangoma*'s efforts to heal.

In the beginning, the Zulu tell us, nothing existed but the Fertile Darkness, floating on the invisible River of Time. At some moment desire arose in the River of Time for the Fertile Darkness to give birth to something out of nothing. From the fertile nothingness

came the spark of consciousness, the Living Fire.

Living Fire was aware; aware that it was alone. From this awareness came the Great Loneliness. All creatures since then share a little of that loneliness, the loneliness that emerges when consciousness sees itself alone in the vastness of everything. In its fury and loneliness, Living Fire began to grow into blazing light in the darkness of Nothingness. And so began the eternal battle of light and dark throughout the universe.

The Wise Ones observe the eternal battle. They know that if Fire and Light were to prevail all living things would die in a roaring universal flame. Conversely, if Darkness and Ice were to prevail all living things would grow cold and stiff until the fire of consciousness ceased to be. Therefore the battle must continue.

The Zulu believe that all life depends on this Great Struggle. Only *Unkulunkulu*, the Great Spirit of Life, can watch over the Great Struggle and remain calm. The Zulu pray to *Unkulunkulu*, asking that this one Great Battle go on while all the lesser ones are given up.

Though the Zulu believe in the Great Struggle, they also believe that the earth is meant to be in peace. Their mythology tells of the Great Earth Mother who created four strong brothers to hold up the earth, to maintain peace, and ultimately to live together in harmony. In the land of ice in the **north** she placed the white brother, in the warm **south** she placed the black brother, in the **west** she placed the red brother, and in the **east** the yellow brother. This is why the *sangoma* believe that all four races of humans are responsible for the stability and peace for all peoples on the earth.

Tree of Life

Zulu legends tell of the progenitors of humanity traveling from their home in the Cosmos to the Sirius solar system before finally arriving on this earth. The Zulu say that all creatures come from these ancient **ancestors**, the *Amadlozi*,

and are, therefore, connected in a great web of life and **evolution**. They believe that we are one human family, in both our origins and our destiny.

Sima-Kade, the Zulu **Tree of Life**, is an expression of the Zulu awareness of the connection of all things. *Sima-Kade* means the One who stands for all **time**, who has been standing for all time, and who will continue standing for all time. All people and things are connected to *Sima-Kade* and through *Sima-Kade* they are all connected to each other.

The most ancient time described in the Zulu mythology is *Endelo-ntulo*. It is similar to the Australian **Aboriginal Dreamtime**. It was a time when everything of the Earth was being formed. The rocks were soft and images were made in stone by the Ancestors as messages left for future peoples.

Patterns of **dreaming** were also laid down during *Endelo-ntulo*. These **dreams** contain messages from the Ancestors that still affect the lives of humans today. The Zulu believe that some of these dreams make us crazy and some make us wise. It is one of these ancient dream patterns from the Ancestors that a person experiences when they are called to become a *sangoma*. This dream experience is called **Ukutwasa**.

The Call—Ukutwasa

During *Ukutwasa*, animals come to the dreamer, usually four lions or leopards and sometimes crocodiles or serpents. The dreamer is pulled apart and devoured by the animals, as in the **dis-memberment** dreams of the shamans of many different **cultures**. After he or she wakes, the dreamer is recognized as **twasa**, an **apprentice** who will begin **training** to become a *sangoma*. The animals who come in *Ukutwasa* become the *sangoma's* helping spirits.

The *sangoma* is one of many people in Zulu culture who are “called to a destiny they do not desire and are helpless to resist.” **The call** must be followed. For Zulus there is a guiding **power** in life that navigates the human soul through

its cycles of reincarnation. This guiding power decides when they are born, in what form, and when they should die. Thus, a recurring theme in Zulu mythology is the acceptance, after great struggle, of a destiny one does not desire and is helpless to resist. This is the fundamental metaphor for the Zulu soul.

Training

The *sangoma's* training is a highly ordered, strictly regulated, process. Candidates must work their way up through twelve stages, or ranks. In each stage they learn to work with one of twelve “vessels” or types of spirits. Few *sangoma* succeed in mastering the twelfth and final stage.

Traditionally the *sangoma* is a woman. However, there are male *sangoma*, many of whom are **gender variant** or **transformed shamans**.

The *twasa* must learn the tribal and community history, mythology, and ceremonies while engaged in a strict regime of personal **healing** and **purification**. The *twasa* must also learn the esoteric skills necessary to perform **divination** and the **diagnosis** of **illness**, witchcraft, sorcery; design and lead healing **rituals**, retrieve lost soul parts, prepare herbal **medicines**, control the **weather**, foretell the future, and interpret dreams. He or she must also learn to enter into **embodiment** trance states with helping spirits, to exercise *tokoloshe* (ghosts), and to counteract *tagati* (hexes).

Trance

Umbilini is the primal source of the *sangoma's* power. Like the *kundalini* of Indian traditions, the *umbilini* is experienced like a snake of **energy** that lies coiled in the pelvis of the practitioner. Through its arousal the *sangoma* enters an altered state for divination, diagnosis, and healing.

The *sangoma* works with the **drum** or meditation and proper breathing to arouse the *umbilini*. While drumming the *sangoma* experiences the *umbilini*

heating, rising up the spine, and bursting through the top of the head. In this energetic state, the *sangoma* is able to call upon the hidden powers of his or her soul to join with the great powers and helping spirits of the unseen world.

The *sangoma*'s goal in entering trance is to draw **knowledge** from "the Hidden Lake," a huge unseen lake in the spirit world where all the knowledge of the universe, past, present, and future, is found.

In some situations Zulu practitioners use suffering and prolonged fasting to arouse the *umbilini*. At other times it is more appropriate to enter trance through happiness and **ecstasy**. In these situations drumming or meditation is used with food and **water** taken sparingly.

Plant Hallucinogens

Two plant species of *Helichrysum* may be used by Zulu shamans to induce trances. *Helichrysum* is a tall, erect, branching herb with a strong scent that can be smoked. The active principles of these plants have not been determined, though coumarine and diterpenes have been reported from the genus.

The Soul

The healing practices of the *sangoma* are based on the Zulu awareness of the soul. The Zulu believe the human soul is an integral part of the Universal Self (God) and that human souls came into being when God created Itself. Therefore, humans exist because God exists.

The human soul is shaped like the person it embodies. It is made out of a spirit substance (the *ena* soul) which contains a transparent sphere (the *moya* soul). The sphere contains two worm-like creatures, a red creature of evil impulses and a blue creature of good impulses. The red and blue creatures move, **dance**, and struggle with each other ceaselessly.

Each individual is perpetually involved in the Great Struggle, in creating balance between good and evil within the *moya*. This balance is essential for

a soul to exist, because both perfect goodness and perfect badness would bring on the premature demise of the soul.

The Zulu believe that women have three souls and men have two. The *moya* is the first, the immortal human soul of men and women. It can be reborn in any form. The *ena* is the second, the mortal human soul, or self. The *ena* is created anew each time the *moya* takes a new form. Therefore a human *ena* is created in a human incarnation and an animal *ena* in an animal incarnation. After the death the *moya* reincarnates while the *ena* wanders the Earth for a bit and then dissipates.

The *ena* soul develops anew in each incarnation to help humans survive by bringing back messages of guidance and warning from the future. The *ena* is able to leave the body and fly through the air, female souls on transparent wings and male souls hovering. Through this **soul flight** the essence of a person can go out into the future and experience things before the body does. If the future event would be best avoided, the soul can speak to the person, usually through a dream, so that the person can make the choices necessary to avoid creating that future event.

For this reason the Zulu place a high value on heeding and attending to their dreams. Dreams are one of the few senses that humans have not lost that allow them to receive messages from *enas*. Relearning to use the lost senses is an important part of the *sangoma*'s training.

After death the *ena* dissipates unless it is nourished with the **prayers**, thoughts, and the **offerings** of the living. Therefore, ancestral *enas* are nourished by their descendants. These *enas* are consulted in times of trouble and serve as intermediaries between the living and the spirit world. Ancestral spirits are the primary helping spirits of the *sangoma*. If not nourished, these *enas* pass into non-existence and a valuable means of communication with the spirit world is lost.

Illness

From the Zulu perspective both physical and mental illnesses are caused when a disruption in some power, or powers, of the universe occurs. This disruption tips the balance of the Great Struggle within the *moya* of the patient. The *sangoma*'s responsibility is to determine what power is disrupted and how to restore balance and harmony again.

Once the cause and the means of healing have been diagnosed, the *sangoma* will take action to aid the healing. Some **diseases** will be considered physical and treated as such. Other diseases will be considered non-physical and treated as the result of disembodied, living entities. Usually these entities begin to devour human souls when the individual's fear has thrown the entity out of balance.

For non-physical diseases, the offending entities must be extracted. However, treatment is not limited to the *sangoma*'s **extraction** work. For both physical and non-physical diseases treatment may involve **sacrifices**, physical preparations of herbs or foods, as well as **amulets** or other **power objects** that work on both the physical and non-physical levels to aid healing.

Healing

The *sangoma* uses divination, usually with **dingaka bones**, to diagnoses illness and to determine the source of the disruption of power. A second divination determines the means necessary to restore harmony and balance to the patient and all forces involved. The *sangoma* works in one or more of a variety of ways: malevolent spirits are removed and returned to their appropriate place, offerings are made to pacify or propitiate offended **nature spirits**, lost souls are retrieved, or mundane issues of **diet**, blockages in the body, or good breathing are addressed.

Medicines

The *sangoma* may apply any number of medical or magical remedies. Medical remedies include herbs, roots, seeds,

minerals, and the bodies of ground insects. Therapies include massage, herbal teas, salves, snuffs, and poultices. Magical remedies include smoke, eggs for extracting harmful energies, ritual, and occasionally animal sacrifices.

Extractions or Exorcisms

At times direct spiritual intervention is necessary, for example when a person is possessed by a particularly malevolent or energetic disembodied spirit. In this case *sangomas* work together to conduct a healing **ceremony** which usually involves an animal sacrifice, because **blood** is usually necessary to placate disruptive spirits. When the offending spirit is finally exorcised the air fills with a terrible stench, followed by smoke or a dark cloud.

Soul Damage and Loss

Some illnesses are caused by a weakening of the soul. The *moya* is believed to inhabit parts of the body, like organs or joints. The *sangoma* can heal by working with the *moya* where it inhabits the body. There is also a state of mind that aligns with the *moya* in each part of the body. The *sangoma* can work with the specific part of the *moya* that he or she feels is weakened in the patient, through the body part or the associated mental state.

A more serious wasting illnesses or death can be caused by **soul loss**. People are very vulnerable to opportunistic illnesses when they have lost a part of their soul. The soul is sensitive to many experiences which can all result in soul loss.

People can lose parts of their soul accidentally or by the actions of others. Individuals can, knowingly or unknowingly, capture parts of a person's soul through insensitivity, disparaging attitudes, or disbelief in Zulu cultural values. The soul can also be damaged or stolen through projections of evil (sorcery) or hatred.

The *sangoma* must determine the cause of the loss and location of the lost soul. The *sangoma* moves into a trance state to perform a **soul retrieval** ritual. The *sangoma* recovers the lost

soul and reattaches it to the patient's body. In cases that involve sorcery, the *sangoma* may have to use magic to battle the sorcerer for the return of the patient's soul.

Creativity

The Zulu believe that to be creative is to heal. A whole community can be healed by creating something beautiful nearby, like a **shrine**, **sacred** hut, or stack of standing stones. The Zulu have pursued **art** in all forms for many generations to cultivate the healing power of creativity. The *sangoma* pursues art, writing and all forms of communication between humans. To be a traditional Zulu healer is to be able to communicate with people on all levels in all possible ways.

Storytelling

Storytelling is another tool of traditional Zulu healers. A story is considered a very important thing, a means of instruction, healing, and enlightenment. Sharing a story is also a way of showing the deepest friendship to another.

Dreams—Preventative Medicine

The Zulu believe that the future can be changed because it is no more static than the present. One action today can initiate a whole series of actions in the future and one action avoided today, can stop a series of future actions.

This allows for a kind of preventative medicine. The *ena* soul can go voluntarily into the future, through the performance of certain rituals, to learn of something that is yet to happen. When the *ena* returns to the present with this knowledge, action can be taken to avoid harm and disease.

Divination Tools

Dingaka bones:

Zulu divination is the art of casting and interpreting divining bones, or *dingaka*. They are used to divine the answers to questions of all kinds including the diagnosis of illness and prescription of treatment. Once the question is formulated, the *dingaka* are cast. The position of each bone, the interrelationship of

the bones, the overall pattern, and any unique relationships patterns all contribute to the meaning of the answer.

The four *dingaka* bones are found during the *sangoma*'s apprenticeship. The *sangoma* and *sanusi* may continue throughout his or her lifetime to collect meaningful bits of seashell, animal bones, and bits of ivory to add to their set of "bones."

Divinations of extreme importance whose answers will affect life and death are performed in several different places. The same question is asked in each of three locations. The *dingaka* are cast indoors, outdoors, and at a sacred **cave** or mountain top. If the indications are the same at each place the answer is considered highly reliable.

Instruments

Drum:

There are many roles for the drum in Zulu life and many different drums. Special drums are used only for worship and ritual. These drums are cared for by "Drummers of High Honor." When they have deteriorated beyond repair, these drums are buried with the full honors given a chief. These drums are created by the master woodcarver and are decorated with the continuous pattern of the Eternal River of Time flowing around them.

The *sangoma* uses the drum to aid in divination and entering altered states. The drum may be played by the *sangoma* or the *sangoma*'s assistant, depending on the complexity of the ritual. The drumbeat creates a barrier of impenetrable noise. Inside this barrier, the *sangoma* enters a trance state and focuses the powers of his or her mind on a single point, be it the answer to a question or an act of healing.

Flute:

Sangomas also play flutes. These flutes are very loud. The voice of the flute is sometimes added to the barrier of **sound** created by the drum to support the *sangoma*'s **journey** or divination.

Costume

Generally, the *sangoma* and *twasa*, wear brightly colored robes for ritual and ceremony. The dress depends on rank and the level of **initiation** within a rank. In ancient times *sangoma* wore blankets of animal skins that have been replaced today with *heia* cloth. The different patterns in the *heia* have different symbolic meanings.

A female *sangoma* wears a long, wool, beaded wig which denote her **humility** before the Universal spirits, a headband denoting the purity of her thoughts, a leopard skin skirt showing her courage and honesty, and sometimes a red blouse symbolizing her readiness to sacrifice in service of her people.

Male *sangoma* adopt the distinctive beaded wig and attire of their female counterparts.

Helping Spirits

The *Amadlozi*, the Ancestral spirits, are the primary helping spirits.

Totem animals are connected to people by tribe. The whole tribe observes **taboos** against eating or harming their totem animal. Totem animals are usually animals familiar to the region in which the people live.

Trickster

The Zulu people believe that it is wise to remember that creation is not perfect and that we are all prone to mistakes. Therefore, heroes who are also fools and the **trickster** are much loved **teachers**. *Kintu* is the hero-fool and the tales of his escapades with the people are many. In the animal kingdom *Mpungushe*, the jackal, is a trickster. He is the eater of dung whose keen nose finds the trails that are invisible to humans. He is loved for stealing **fire** from the village of the gods to warm the first humans. *Anansi*, the spider, also a trickster, weaves the web of creation which is full of many tricks.

Writing

The Zulu have an ancient system of writing consisting of notches called

coolu or *igamm*. This system is very similar to the **ogham** writing system of the **Celtic** people of the British Isles.

Supernatural Senses

Traditional Zulus believe all humans possess twelve natural senses, seven senses beyond the basic five. Examples of these senses are to foresee future events, to move consciousness outside of the physical body at will (usually in times of crisis), and the ability to influence objects, like the roll of dice. Sharing information about these senses outside of the Zulu people is still bound in secrecy.

Song of the Stars

The mythology and history of the Zulu people, like other African peoples, are full of descriptions of stars and planets, of the intelligent beings that belong to the stars, and of how these beings have interacted with humans and animals. The black people of South Africa possess amazing knowledge that has been handed down generation to generation about the Cosmos and our solar system. For example, the Zulu have always known that the earth orbits the **sun**.

Part of the *sangoma*'s responsibility is to pass this information to the next generation. It is also the *sangoma*'s responsibility to be prepared for first contact with a variety of different beings from the stars.

A **song** of the *sangomas* says, "There shall arise out of the ashes of man, a newer man who shall rule the far stars, carrying with him the seven laws of love; and that the first and the greatest law of God—doing unto others as you would have them do to you—will be the law of that time. Then humanity can stand fearlessly and joyfully before the Universe, with love in his heart, and be welcomed home as a long-lost child." See also **altered states of consciousness; costume; dreamtime; exorcism; Ngungi, the Crippled Smith; plant hallucinogens**.

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Zuñi Man-Woman

See *Ihamana*.

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